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LOCKE

BY

THOMAS FOWLER

PROFESSOR OF LOGIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

NOTE.

In writing the chapters on Locke's Life, I have derived much information from the biographies of Lord King and Mr. Fox-Bourne, especially from the latter, which contains a large amount of most interesting documents never before printed. In a work like the present, where numerous foot-notes would be out of place, I am obliged to content myself with this general acknowledgment. I may add that I have also referred to several other authorities, both printed and in manuscript; and, in some cases, I believe that my account will be found more precise than that given in the larger biographies.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

LOCKE'S BOYHOOD.—HIS EARLY LIFE IN OXFORD. 9

CHAPTER II.

MEDICAL STUDIES.—PUBLIC EMPLOYMENTS.—CONNEXION WITH SHAFTESBURY 15

CHAPTER III.

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.—FURTHER RELATIONS WITH SHAFTESBURY.—EXPULSION FROM CHRIST CHURCH 25

CHAPTER IV.

RESIDENCE IN HOLLAND.—THE REVOLUTION.—RETURN TO ENGLAND.—PUBLICATION OF THE "ESSAY" AND OTHER WORKS . 35

CHAPTER V.

LIFE AT OATES.—FRIENDSHIPS.—FURTHER PUBLICATIONS . . 46

CHAPTER VI.

POLITICAL AFFAIRS.—PUBLIC OCCUPATIONS.—RELATIONS WITH THE KING 58

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE.

CONTROVERSY WITH STILLINGFLEET.—OTHER LITERARY OCCUPATIONS.—DOMESTIC LIFE.—PETER KING.—LATTER YEARS.—DEATH. 70

CHAPTER VIII.

ESSAY ON HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. 85

CHAPTER IX.

LOCKE'S OPINIONS ON RELIGION AND MORALS, AND HIS THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS 100

CHAPTER X.

THE THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND THE CONDUCT OF THE UNDERSTANDING 109

CHAPTER XI.

WORKS ON GOVERNMENT, TRADE, AND FINANCE 116

CHAPTER XII.

LOCKE'S INFLUENCE ON THOUGHT 125

LOCKE.

CHAPTER. I

LOCKE'S BOYHOOD.—HIS EARLY LIFE IN OXFORD.

JOHN LOCKE, perhaps the greatest, but certainly the most characteristic, of English philosophers, was born at Wrington, a pleasant village in the north of Somersetshire, August 29, 1632. His family, however, resided in the village of Pensford, and the parish of Publow, within a few miles of Bristol. It was there, probably, that Locke spent the greater part of his early life. His mother appears to have died while he was young. From his father, John Locke (b. 1606), who seems to have inherited a fair estate, and who practised, with some success, as a country attorney, he probably derived, if not his earliest instruction, at least some of his earliest influences and some of his most sterling characteristics. "From Mr. Locke I have often heard of his father," says Lady Masham in a MS. letter quoted by Mr. Fox-Bourne in his Life of Locke, "that he was a man of parts. Mr. Locke never mentioned him but with great respect and affection. His father used a conduct toward him when young that he often spoke of afterwards with great approbation. It was the being severe to him by keeping him in much awe and at a distance when he was a boy, but relaxing, still by degrees, of that severity as he grew up to be a man, till, he being become capable of it, he lived perfectly with him as a friend. And I remember he has told me that his father, after he was a man, solemnly asked his pardon for having struck him once in a passion when he was a boy."

Locke's boyhood coincided pretty nearly with the troubles of the Civil Wars. "I no sooner perceived myself in the world," he wrote in 1660, "but I found myself in a storm which has lasted almost hitherto." His father, when Locke was hardly ten years old, publicly announced, in the parish church of Publow, his assent to the protest of the Long Parliament, and, a few weeks afterwards, took the field, on the Parliamentary side, as captain of a troop of horse in a regiment of volunteers. Though the fortunes of the family undoubtedly suffered from this step on the part of the young attorney, the political and religious interests which it created and

kept alive in his household must have contributed, in no small degree, to shape the character and determine the sympathies of his elder son.

Locke, then, may be regarded as having been fortunate in early surroundings. Born in one of the more charming of the rural districts of England, not far, however, from a city which was then one of the most important centres of commerce and politics; sprung from respectable and well-to-do parents, of whom the father, at least, possessed more than ordinary intelligence; accustomed, from his earliest boyhood, to watch the progress of the great events, and to listen to the discussion of great and stirring questions; there seems to have been nothing in his early life to retard or mar the development of his genius, and much that we may not unreasonably connect with the marked peculiarities, both moral and intellectual, of his subsequent career.

It was probably in the year 1646 that, through the interest of Colonel Popham, a friend and client of his father, Locke was admitted at Westminster School, where, probably in the following year, he was elected on the foundation. Here he must have remained about six years, till his election to a Westminster Studentship at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1652. Of the manner in which Locke spent these years we have no definite information. The stern disciplinarian, Mr. Busby, had been head master for about eight years when he entered the school, and among his schoolfellows, senior to him by about a year, were Dryden and South. The friends whom he made at Westminster, though highly respectable in after-life, did not achieve any great reputation. Of the studies which then constituted the ordinary school curriculum, his matured opinions are to be found in the "Thoughts concerning Education," which will be described in a subsequent chapter. To judge from this book, the impressions left on Locke's mind by our English public school education were not of a pleasant or favourable kind.

Locke appears to have commenced his residence at Christ Church in the Michaelmas Term of 1652, soon after he had turned twenty years of age. His matriculation before the Vice-Chancellor bears date Nov. 27. Since the outbreak of the Civil Wars, both the University and the College had undergone many vicissitudes. At the moment when Locke entered, Cromwell was Chancellor; and Dr. John Owen, who was destined to be for some time the leading resident, had been recently appointed Dean of Christ Church and Vice-Chancellor of the University. Owen was an Independent, and, for a divine of that age, a man of remarkably tolerant and liberal views. Though, then as now, a dignitary in Owen's position probably had and could have but little intercourse with the junior members of his society, it is not improbable that Locke may have derived his first bias towards those opinions on the question of religious toleration, for which he afterwards became so famous, from the publications and the practice of the Puritan Dean of Christ Church. Locke's tutor was a Mr. Cole, afterwards Principal of St. Mary Hall, but of his relations with his pupil we hear nothing of any im-

portance. Wood calls him a "fanatical tutor;" by which, of course, he does not mean more than that he was a Puritan.

During the Civil Wars the discipline and reputation of the Universities, however we may apportion the blame, seems to have suffered most severely. In these troublous times, indeed, it could hardly be otherwise. There is considerable evidence to show that, in the Little or Barebones Parliament of 1653, there was a serious attempt to suppress the Colleges and Universities altogether, and to apply the proceeds of their estates, as Clarendon tells us, "for the public service, and to ease the people from the payment of taxes and contributions." If such an attempt ever had any chance of success—and from an oration of Dr. Owen we may infer that it had—it must have spread consternation amongst University circles, and been a frequent subject of conversation during the early period of Locke's residence in Oxford. But the Puritan party, which was now in the ascendant, was determined that, at any rate, no handle should be given to the enemy by any lack of discipline or by the infrequency of religious exercises. "Frequent preaching in every house," Anthony à Wood tell us, "was the chief matter aimed at" by the Visitors appointed by Cromwell in 1652. Thus, on June 27, 1653, they ordered that "all Bachelors of Arts and Undergraduates in Colleges and Halls he required, every Lord's day, to give an account to some person of known ability and piety of the sermons they had heard and their attendance on other religious exercises that day. The Heads also or Deputies of the said Societies, with all above the Degree of Bachelor, were then ordered to be personally present at the performance of the said exercise, and to take care that it be attended with prayer and such other duties of religion as are proper to such a meeting." In addition to the Sunday observances, there were also, in most Colleges, if not in all, one or two sermons or religious meetings in the course of the week. Locke, if we may judge from his character in latter years, must have occasionally found these tedious, and doubtless lengthy, exercises somewhat irksome and unprofitable. But we do not meet in his writings with any definite complaints of them, as we do of the scholastic disputations and some other parts of the academical course as pursued at that time. Of the disputations, which then constituted a very important element in the University curriculum, he expresses an unfavourable, perhaps too unfavourable an opinion. Writing in 1690, in the "Thoughts concerning Education," he says: "If the use and end of right reasoning be to have right notions and a right judgment of things, to distinguish between truths and falsehoods, right and wrong, and to act accordingly, be sure not to let your son be bred up in the art and formality of disputing—either practising it himself or admiring it in others—unless, instead of an able man, you desire to have him an insignificant wrangler, opiniator in discourse, and priding himself in contradicting others; or, which is worse, questioning everything, and thinking there is no such thing as truth to be sought, but only victory, in disputing. There connot be anything so disingenuous, so becoming a gentle-

man, or any one who pretends to be a rational creature, as not to yield to plain reason and the conviction of clear arguments. Is there anything more inconsistent with civil conversation, and the end of all debate, than not to take an answer, though ever so full and satisfactory? . . . For this, in short, is the way and perfection of logical disputes, that the opponent never takes any answer, nor the respondent ever yields to any argument." With the logic and rhetoric, the Latin speaking and writing, then in vogue, Locke is almost equally discontented. In fact, he looked back, in after-life, with little gratitude on the somewhat dry course of studies which the University then prescribed to its younger scholars. "I have often heard him say, in reference to his first years spent in the University," says Lady Masham, "that he had so small satisfaction there from his studies, as finding very little light brought thereby to his understanding, that he became discontented with his manner of life, and wished his father had rather designed him for anything else than what he was destined to, apprehending that his no greater progress in knowledge proceeded from his not being fitted or capacitated to be a scholar." We must, however, by no means infer that Locke had not derived considerable benefit from the discipline which he disparages. At any rate, the scholastic teaching of Oxford had a large share in forming, by reaction, many of his most characteristic opinions, while the Essay, in almost every page, bears distinctive marks of his early studies. Notwithstanding his depreciation, amounting often to ridicule, of the subjects he had learnt in his youth, we can hardly doubt that, if Locke had been brought up in an University where logic and philosophy did not form part of the course, his greatest work would never have been written.

Mr. Fox-Bourne attempts to supply a detailed account of the lectures which Locke attended, and the course of studies which he pursued, during his undergraduate and bachelor days. This account, however, betrays an innocent belief in the rigid enforcement and observance of University and College statutes, which, I am sorry to say, I cannot share. Minute regulations regarding courses of study and attendance at lectures are apt very soon to fall into desuetude, and it is impossible now to reconstruct with any accuracy, from the perusal of merely formal documents, a plan of the student life of the Commonwealth. It is to be much regretted that Locke and his contemporaries have not left us more specific information on the subject. All we can now say is that, if the authorities duly enforced their statutes and regulations, especially those relating to professorial lectures, many of which were appointed to be given at eight o'clock in the morning, the students of those days had by no means an easier time of it than their successors, even in these days of competition and examinations.

The stated regulations and prescribed statutes of a seat of learning have, however, often far less to do with the formation of a student's mind than the society of the young men of his own age with whom his residence throws him into contact. Young men often educate one another far more effectually than they can be educated

by their tutors or their books. The mutual confidences, the lively interchange of repartee, the free discussion of all manner of subjects in college rooms or during the afternoon walk, are often far more stimulating and informing to the intellect than the professorial lecture, however learned, or the tutorial catechising, however searching. Of this less formal and more agreeable species of education Locke appears to have enjoyed his full share. He was not, according to the account which he gave of himself to Lady Masham, "any very hard student," but "sought the company of pleasant and witty men, with whom he likewise took great delight in corresponding by letters; and in conversation and these correspondences he spent for some years much of his time."

It should be noticed that in the year 1654 Owen published a volume of congratulatory verses addressed to Cromwell on the treaty recently concluded with the Dutch, entitled "Musarum Oxoniensium ἐλαιοφορία." Among the many contributors to this volume, young and old, was Locke, who wrote a short copy of Latin, and a longer copy of English verses. These compositions do not rise much above, or sink much below, the ordinary level of such exercises; but what is curious is that Locke's first published efforts in literature should have been in verse, especially when we bear in mind his strong and somewhat perverse judgment on verse-writing in § 174 of the "Thoughts concerning Education." The fact of his having been invited to contribute to the volume shows that he was regarded as one of the more promising young students of his time.

To the period of Locke's life covered by this chapter probably belong some interesting notes on philosophy and its divisions, found in his father's memorandum-book. These reflections afford evidence that he had already begun to think for himself, independently of the scholastic traditions. I append one or two characteristic extracts:

"Dialectic, that is Logic, is to make reasons to grow, and improve both Physic and also Ethic, which is Moral Philosophy."

"Moral Philosophy is the knowledge of precepts of all honest manners which reason acknowledgeth to belong and appertain to man's nature, as the things in which we differ from beasts. It is also necessary for the comely government of man's life."

"Necessity was the first finder-out of Moral Philosophy, and experience (which is a trusty teacher) was the first master thereof."

Locke took his B.A. degree on the 14th of February, 1655–56, and his M.A. degree on the 29th of June, 1658, the latter on the same day with Nathaniel Crewe, afterwards Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham, and Joseph Glanvill, the celebrated writer on witchcraft, and author of *Scepsis Scientifica* The statutable time of taking both degrees was anticipated, but irregularities of this kind were not then infrequent. On the 24th of December, 1660, he was appointed Greek Lecturer at Christ Church for the ensuing year, thus taking his place among the authorised teachers of his college,

and so entering on a new phase of university life. Very shortly after this date, namely on February 13, 1660–61, the elder Locke died, æt. fifty-four. Locke's only brother, Thomas, who was some years younger than himself, died of consumption shortly after his father. By the time, therefore, that Locke had fairly entered on his duties as an officer of his college, he was left alone of all his family.

Though it was not till a much later period of his life that Locke published any works, his pen was at this time by no means idle. In 1661 he began a series of common-place books, often containing long articles on the subjects which were occupying his thoughts at the time. It is, moreover, to the period immediately preceding or immediately following the Restoration, that Mr. Fox-Bourne attributes an unpublished and till recently unknown Essay, entitled "Reflections upon the Roman Commonwealth." Many of the remarks in this Essay already show what we should call liberal opinions in religion and politics, and anticipate views long afterwards propounded in the works on government and toleration. The religion instituted by Numa is idealised, as having insisted on only two articles of faith, the goodness of the gods, and the necessity of worshipping them, "in which worship the chief of all was to be innocent, good and just." Thus it avoided "creating heresies and schisms," and "narrowing the bottom of religion by clogging it with creeds and catechisms and endless niceties about the essences, properties, and attributes of God."

Of more interest, perhaps, is another unpublished treatise, written just after the Restoration, in which Locke asks, and answers in the affirmative, the following question: Whether the civil magistrate may lawfully impose and determine the use of indifferent things in reference to religious worship. This tract seems to have been intended as a remonstrance with those of the author's own party who questioned any right in the civil magistrate to interfere in religious matters, and who, therefore, were ready to reject with disdain the assurances of compromise and moderation contained in the king's delaration on ecclesiastical affairs, issued at the beginning of his reign. Locke at that time, like many other moderate men, seems to have entertained the most sanguine hopes of pacification and good government under the rule of the new monarch. "As for myself," he writes, "there is no one can have a greater respect and veneration for authority than I. I no sooner perceived myself in the world, but I found myself in a storm, which has lasted almost hitherto, and therefore cannot but entertain the approaches of a calm with the greatest joy and satisfaction." "I find that a general freedom is but a general bondage, that the popular asserters of public liberty are the greatest ingrossers of it too, and not unfitly called its keepers." This reaction, however, against the past, and these sanguine expectations of the future, can have lasted but a short time. The tendencies of the new government were soon apparent, and the pamphlet was never published.

CHAPTER II.

MEDICAL STUDIES.—PUBLIC EMPLOYMENTS.—CONNEXION WITH SHAFTESBURY.

LOCKE, at the time of his father's death and his entrance on college office, was in his twenty-ninth year. At the election of college officers on Christmas Eve, 1662, he was transferred from the Greek Lectureship to the Lectureship in Rhetoric, and, on the 23rd of December in the following year, he was again transferred to another office. This office was the Censorship of Moral Philosophy (the Senior Censorship) ; the Censorship of Natural Philosophy (the Junior Censorship) he appears never to have held. On the 23rd of December, 1665, he is no longer in office, being now merely one of the twenty senior M.A. students, called "Theologi," who were bound to be in priests' orders. Of the manner in which Locke discharged his duties as a lecturer we have no record. He seems also to have served in the capacity of tutor to several undergraduates at this period, but of his relations to his pupils we, unfortunately, know next to nothing.

How is it that Locke, holding a clerical studentship, was not a clergyman? The disturbed condition of the Church and the Universities during the last quarter of a century had probably led to great laxity in the enforcement of college statutes and by-laws. Moreover, for a time, it would seem, he seriously contemplated taking the step of entering holy orders, and the authorities of his college would probably be unwilling to force upon him a hasty decision. At length, however, he finally abandoned this idea, deciding in favour of the profession of physic. In the ordinary course he would have forfeited his studentship, but he was fortunate to obtain a royal dispensation (by no means an uncommon mode of intervention at that time), retaining him in his place, "that he may still have further time to prosecute his studies." This dispensation is dated Nov. 14, 1666.

Meanwhile, Locke had paid his first visit to the Continent. The occasion of it was an embassy to the Elector of Brandenburg, whose alliance or neutrality it was sought to obtain, in the then pending war with Holland. Sir Walter Vane was head of the embassy, and Locke, who probably owed his nomination to the interest of his old schoolfellow, William Godolphin, was appointed secretary. They left England in the middle of November, 1665, and arrived at Cleve, the capital of Brandenburg, on the 30th of the same month (Dec. 9,

N.S.). Here they remained for two months, the mission coming to nothing, in consequence of the English Government being unable or unwilling to advance the money which the Elector required as the price of his adhesion. The state-papers addressed by the Ambassador of the Government at home are mainly in Locke's handwriting; but far more interesting than these are the private letters addressed by Locke to his friends, Mr. Strachey, of Sutton Court, near Bristol, and the celebrated Robert Boyle. These are full of graphic touches descriptive of the manners and peculiarities of the people among whom he found himself. Like a conscientious sightseer, he availed himself of the various opportunities of observing their eating and drinking, attended their devotions—whether Catholic, Calvinist, or Lutheran—submitting himself to be bored by poetasters and sucking theologians, and consoled himself for the difficulty of finding a pair of gloves by noting the tardiness of German commerce. Though he had "thought for a while to take leave of all University affairs," he found himself ridden pitilessly by an "academic goblin."

"I no sooner was got here, but I was welcomed with a divinity disputation. I was no sooner rid of that, but I found myself up to the ears in poetry, and overwhelmed in Helicon." "But my University goblin left me not so; for the next day, when I thought I had been rode out only to airing, I was had to a foddering of choppel hay or logic, forsooth! Poor *materia prima* was canvassed cruelly, stripped of all the gay dress of her forms, and shown naked to us, though I must confess, I had not eyes good enough to see her. The young monks (which one would not guess by their looks) are subtle people, and dispute as eagerly for *materia prima* as if they were to make their dinner on it, and, perhaps, sometimes it is all their meal, for which others' charity is more to be blamed than their stomachs. . . . The truth is, here hog-shearing is much in its glory, and our disputing in Oxford comes as far short of it as the rhetoric of Carfax does that of Billingsgate."

At a dinner, described with a good deal of humour, with the Franciscan friars, he was still pursued by his Oxford recollections:

"The prior was a good plump fellow, that had more belly than brains; and methought was very fit to be reverenced, and not much unlike some head of a college."

One circumstance Locke noticed much to the advantage of the foreigners, namely, their good-natured toleration for each other's opinions. Writing to Boyle, he says—

"The distance in their churches gets not into their houses. They quietly permit one another to choose their way to heaven; for I cannot observe any quarrels or animosities amongst them upon the account of religion. This good correspondence is owing partly to the power of the magistrate, and partly to the prudence and good-nature of the people, who, as I find by inquiring, entertain different opinions without any secret hatred or rancour."

And though, like mos. Englishmen, of decided Protestant convictions, travelling on the Continent for the first time, Locke indulged in a good deal of merriment at the Catholic ceremonies, he pays, in one of his letters to Strachey, a cheerful tribute to the personal worth of the Catholic priests. He had not met, he says, with any people so good-natured or so civil, and he had received many courtesies from them, which he should always gratefully acknowledge.

Locke returned to England towards the end of February, 1665–66, and was at once offered the post of secretary to the Earl of Sandwich, who was on the point of setting out as ambassador to Spain. He wavered for a short time, but, though doubtful whether he had not "let slip the minute that they say every one has once in his life to make himself," he finally declined the offer. Before settling down again in Oxford, he spent a few weeks in Somersetshire, paying probably, amongst other visits, one he had promised himself to Strachey at Sutton Court, "a greater rarity than my travels have afforded me; for one may go a long way before one meets a friend." During his stay in Somersetshire, he attempted to try some experiments in the Mendip lead-mines with a barometer which had been sent to him for the purpose by Boyle. But the miners and their wives made a successful resistance. "The sight of the engine and my desire of going down some of their gruffs gave them terrible apprehensions. The women, too, were alarmed, and think us still either projectors or conjurors."

At the beginning of May, Locke was again in his rooms in Oxford. He seems to have lost no time in setting to work afresh on the studies which might qualify him to exercise the profession of medicine. In his letters to Boyle, he makes frequent reference to chemical experiments and to collecting plants for medical purposes.

It is an unexplained circumstance that, notwithstanding a letter to the Hebdomadal Board from Lord Clarendon, then Chancellor of the University, signifying his assent to a dispensation, enabling Locke to accumulate the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor in Medcine, he never took those degrees. The obstacle may have arisen from himself, or, more probably, it may have been due to some sinister influence on the Hebdomadal Board preventing the assent of that body to the required decree. Any way, it is curious that eleven days after the date of Lord Clarendon's letter is dated the dispensation from the Crown (already referred to on page 15), enabling him to retain his studentship, notwithstanding his neglect to enter holy orders.

During the summer of 1666, we are introduced to one of the turning-points in Locke's life—his first acquaintance with Lord Shaftesbury, or, as he then was, Lord Ashley. Of the chequered career or the enigmatical character of this celebrated nobleman it is no part of my task to speak. It is enough to say that, as an ad-

vocate of religious toleration and an opponent alike of sacerdotal claims in the Church and absolutist principles in the State, he appealed to Locke's warmest and deepest sympathies. The acquaintance was made through David Thomas, an Oxford physician, and the occasion of it was Lord Ashley's coming to Oxford to drink the Astrop waters. The duty of providing these waters (Astrop being a village at some distance from Oxford) seems to have been entrusted by Thomas to Locke, but, there having been some miscarriage, Locke waited on Lord Ashley to excuse the delay. "My lord," says Lady Masham, "in his wonted manner, received him very, civilly, accepting his excuse with great easiness, and when Mr. Locke would have taken his leave of him, would needs have him to stay supper with him, being much pleased with his conversation. But if my lord was pleased with the company of Mr. Locke, Mr. Locke was yet more so with that of my Lord Ashley." The result of this short and apparently accidental interview was the beginning of an intimate friendship, which seems never afterwards to have been broken, and which exercised a decisive influence on the rest of Locke's career.

On September 2 of this year broke out the Great-Fire of London, which raged without intermission for three days and nights. Under the date of September 3 we find in Locke's "Register," which was afterwards published in Boyle's *General History of the Air*, this curious entry:—"Dim reddish sunshine. The unusual color of the air, which, without a cloud appearing, made the sunbeams of a strange red dim light, was very remarkakle. We had then heard nothing of the fire of London; but it appeared afterwards to be the smoke of London, then burning, which, driven this way by an easterly wind, caused this odd phenomenon." The Register, in which this entry is made begins on June 24, 1666, and contains, with many intermissions, the observations made by Locke, in Oxford and London, up to June 30, 1683, on the readings of the "thermoscope," the "baroscope," and the "hygroscope," together with the direction of the wind and the state of the weather. It not only affords valuable evidence of Locke's whereabouts at different times, but also shows the interest which he took in physical research.

In the early summer of 1667, Locke appears to have taken up his residence with Lord Ashley in London, and "from that time," according to Lady Masham, "he was with my Lord Ashley as a man at home, and lived in that family much esteemed, not only by my lord, but by all the friends of the family." His residence in Lord Ashley's family was, however, probably broken by occasional visits to Oxford.

To this period of Locke's life may be assigned the unpublished *Essay concerning Toleration*, which, with so much other valuable matter, is now for the first time accessible to the general reader in Mr. Fox-Bourne's *Life*. This *Essay*, it is not improbable, was written at the suggestion, or for the guidance of Lord Ashley, and so may have been widely circulated amongst the advocates of "toler-

ation" and "comprehension"—words which were at that time in the mouth of every man who took any interest in religion or politics. As I shall have to speak expressly of the published *Letters on Toleration*, which were written about twenty years later, and which contain substantially the same views as this earlier *Essay*, I shall not here detain the reader further than by giving him the general conclusions at which Locke had now arrived. These may be stated summarily under three heads: first, "all speculative opinions and religious worship have a clear title to universal toleration," and in these every man may use "a perfect uncontrollable liberty, without any guilt or sin at all, provided always that it be all done sincerely and out of conscience to God, according to the best of his knowledge and persuasion;" secondly, "there are some opinions and actions which are in their natural tendency absolutely destructive to human society—as, that faith may be broken with heretics; that one is bound to broach and propagate any opinion he believes himself; and such like; and, in actions, all manner of frauds and injustice—and these the magistrate ought not to tolerate at all;" thirdly, another class of opinions and actions, inasmuch as their "influence to good or bad" depends on "the temper of the state and posture of affairs," "have a right to toleration so far only as they do not interfere with the advantages of the public, or serve any way to disturb the government." The practical result of the discussion is, that while "papists" should not "enjoy the benefit of toleration, because where they have power they think themselves bound to deny it to others," the "fanatics," as the various classes of Protestant Dissenters were then called, should be at least "tolerated," if not "comprehended" in the national Church. Indeed, as to "comprehension," Locke lays down the general principle that "your articles in speculative opinions should be few and large, and your ceremonies in worship few and easy—which is latitudinism."

This must have been one of the quietest and happiest periods of Locke's life. He seems to have been unobtrusively pursuing his studies, and gradually making the acquaintance of the great world and of public affairs through the facilities which his residence with Lord Ashley afforded him. Both his own occupations and his relations to the Ashley family appear to have been of a very miscellaneous kind. Medicine, philosophy, and politics engaged his attention by turns. To Lord Ashley and his family he was at once general adviser, doctor, and friend. In June, 1668, after consulting various other medical men, he performed on Lord Ashley a difficult operation for the purpose of removing an "imposthume in the breast," and is said thus to have saved his life. To the only child, Anthony Ashley, he acted as tutor. But, by the time the youth was seventeen, Locke was entrusted with a far more delicate business than his tuition. This was no less than finding him a wife. After other young ladies had been considered and rejected, Locke accompanied his charge on a visit to the Earl of Rutland, at Belvoir Castle, and negotiated a match with the Earl's daughter,

the Lady Dorothy Manners. The match seems to have been a happy one; and Locke continued his services of general utility to the Ashley family by acting on more than one occasion as Lady Dorothy's medical attendant. On the 26th of February, 1670–71, he assisted at the birth of a son and heir, Anthony, who subsequently became third Earl of Shaftesbury, and who, as the author of the *Characteristics*, occupies a position of no inconsiderable importance in the history of English philosophy. It is on the evidence of this Earl of Shaftesbury that we learn the share taken by Locke in effecting the union of his father and mother. "My father was too young and inexperienced to choose a wife for himself, and my grandfather too much in business to choose one for him." The consequence was, that "all was thrown upon Mr. Locke, who being already so good a judge of men, my grandfather doubted not of his equal judgment in women. He departed from him, entrusted and sworn, as Abraham's head servant 'that ruled over all that he had,' and went into a far country 'to seek for his son a wife,' whom he as successfully found."

Though so much of Locke's time seems to have been spent on medical studies and practice, he possessed no regular qualification. In 1670 another attempt had been made, but in vain, to procure him the Doctor of Medicine's degree from the University of Oxford. Lord Ashley successfully enlisted the good services of the Duke of Ormond, the Chancellor of the University; but on learning the opposition of Dean Fell and Dr. Allestree, Locke desired his patron to withdraw the application. Both now and on the former occasion, alluded to above (p. 17), the opposition was probably based on Locke's tendencies, known or suspected, to liberal views in religion; nor would the connexion with Lord Ashley be at all likely to mitigate the sternness of the college and university authorities. It had, of course, all along been open to him to proceed to the Doctor's degree in the ordinary way, by attending lectures and performing exercises; and whether he was prevented from doing so by the tediousness of the process, by the hope of attaining the degree through a shorter and easier method, or by a certain amount of indecision as to whether after all he would adopt the medical profession, we cannot say. Afterwards, we shall see, he proceeded to the degree of Bachelor of Medicine, but whether in the ordinary course, or by dispensation, is not known.

As connected with Locke's medical pursuits, I may here mention his friendship with Sydenham. We do not know when the acquaintance commenced, but Sydenham writing to Boyle, so early as April 2, 1668, speaks of "my friend Mr. Locke." That Sydenham entertained great respect for the medical skill and judgment of Locke—who appears to have accompanied him in his visits to his patients, and, in turn, to have availed himself of Sydenham's assistance in attending to the Ashley household—there can be no doubt. Writing to Mapletoft, their common friend, and a physician of some eminence, in 1676, he says: "You know how thoroughly my method [of curing fevers] is approved of by an intimate and

common friend of ours, and one who has closely and exhaustively examined the subject—I mean Mr. John Locke, a man whom, in the acuteness of his intellect, in the steadiness of his judgment, and in the simplicity, that is, in the excellence, of his manners, I confidently declare to have amongst the men of our own time few equals and no superior." A number of notes and papers, still extant, attest the interest which Locke now took in medical studies, and the hopes with which he looked forward to improvements in medical practice. That the sympathy between him and Sydenham was very close, is evident from the writings of both.

But, meanwhile, he was also busy with other pursuits. One of these was the administration, under Ashley, and the other "lords proprietors," of the colony of Carolina. In 1663 this colony had been granted by Charles the Second to eight "lords proprietors," of whom Ashley was one. Locke, when he went to live in Ashley's family, appears to have become, though without any formal appointment, a sort of chief secretary and manager to the association. A vast amount of miscellaneous business seems to have been transacted by him in this capacity; but what to us would be most interesting, if we could determine it, would be the share he took in drawing up the document entitled "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina," issued on the 1st of March, 1669–70. Many of the articles, embodying, as they do, a sort of modified feudalism, must have been distasteful to Locke, and it is hardly possible to suppose that he was the originator of them. But perhaps we may trace his hand in the articles on religion, between which and his views, as stated in his unpublished papers written before and his published works written after this time, there is a large amount of correspondence. No man was to be permitted to be a freeman of Carolina unless he acknowledged a God, and agreed that God was to be publicly and solemnly worshipped. But within these limits any seven persons might constitute a church, provided that they upheld the duty of every man, if called on, to bear witness to the truth, and agreed on some external symbol by which such witness might be signified. Any one, however, who did not belong to some such communion was to be regarded as outside the protection of the law. The members of one church were not to molest or persecute those of another; and no man was to "use any reproachful, reviling, or abusive language against the religion of any church or profession, that being the certain way of disturbing the peace, and of hindering the conversion of any to the truth." Amongst the miscellaneous provisions in this code is one strictly forbidding any one to plead before a court of justice for money or reward; and another, enacting that "every freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slaves, of what opinion or religion soever."

In 1668 Locke was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and in 1669 and 1672 was placed on the Council, but he never appears to have taken much part in the proceedings of the society. On the other hand, there seem to have been certain less formal meetings

of a few friends, constituting possibly a sort of club, in the discussions of which he took a more active share. It was at one of these meetings that the conversation took place which led to Locke's writing his famous *Essay* (see page 127). According to a marginal note made by Sir James Tyrrell in his copy of the first edition, now in the British Museum, the discussion on this occasion turned on "the principles of morality and revealed religion." The date of this memorable meeting was, according to the same authority, the winter of 1673; but according to Lady Masham, it was 1670 or 1671. Anyway, there is an entry on the main subject of the *Essay* in Locke's Common-place Book, beginning "Sic cogitavit de intellectu humano Johannes Locke, anno 1671." In this brief entry the origin of all knowledge is referred to sense, and "sensible qualties" are stated to be "the simplest ideas we have, and the first object of our understanding"—a theory which, as we shall hereafter see, was supplemented in the *Essay* by the addition to the ultimate sources of knowledge of simple ideas of reflection. The *Essay* itself was not published till nearly twenty years after this date, in 1690.

Locke's health had never been strong, and, in the years 1670–72 he seems to have suffered much from a troublesome cough, indicative of disease of the lungs. Connected with this illness was a short journey which he made in France, in the suite of the Countess of Northumberland, in the autumn of 1672. Soon after his return, his patron, who had lately been created Earl of Shaftesbury, was appointed to the highest office of the State, the Lord High Chancellorship of England. Locke shared in his good fortune, and was made Secretary of Presentations—that is, of the Chancellor's church patronage—with a salary of 300*l.* a year. The modern reader, especially when he recollects Locke's intimacy with Shaftesbury, is surprised to find that he dined at the Steward's table, that he was expected to attend prayers three times a day, and that, when the Chancellor drove out in state, he was accustomed, with the other secretaries, to walk by the side of the coach, while, as "my lord" got in and out, he "went before him bareheaded." The distinctions of rank were, however, far more marked in those days than at present, and the high officers of state were still surrounded with much of the elaborate ceremonial which had obtained in the times of the Tudors.

To the period of Locke's excursion in France, or that immediately succeeding it, we may refer a free translation—or rather, adaptation—of three of the *Essais de Morale* of Pierre Nicole, a well-known Jansenist, and the friend of Pascal and Arnauld. These *Essays*, which were translated for the use of the Countess of Shaftesbury, were apparently not designed for publication, and, in fact, were first given to the world by Dr. Hancock, in 1828. They are mainly remarkable as affording evidences of the depth and sincerity of Locke's religious convictions.

Routine and official duties now occupied much of his time, and must have interfered sadly with his favorite studies. From dis-

cussing the tangled and ambiguous politics of this period I purposely refrain; but there is one official act, recorded of Locke at this time, which places him in so incongruous a light that his biographer can hardly pass it over in silence. At the opening of the Parliament which met on February 4, 1672–73, Shaftesbury, amplifying the King's Speech, made, though it is said unwillingly and with much concern, his famous defence of the Dutch war, and his attack on the Dutch nation, culminating in the words "Delenda est Carthago." Locke, we are sorrow to find, though the act was a purely ministerial one, stood at his elbow with a written copy, to prompt him in case of failure.

On the 9th of November, 1673, Shaftesbury, who had incurred the displeasure of the king by his support of the Test Bill, and who was now looked on as one of the principal leaders of the Anti-Catholic party, was summarily dismissed from the Chancellorship. Locke, of course, lost at the same time the Secretaryship of Presentations; but he did not, as meaner men might have done, try to insinuate himself into wealth and power through other avenues. "When my grandfather," says the third Earl of Shaftesbury, "quitted the Court, and began to be in danger from it, Mr. Locke now shared with him in dangers, as before in honors and advantages. He entrusted him with his secretest negotiations, and made use of his assistant pen in matters that nearly concerned the State and were fit to be made public."

Locke's connexion with the affairs of the colony of Carolina has already been mentioned. Business of this kind, owing to his relations with Shaftesbury, multiplied upon him, and on the 15th of October, 1673, shortly before Shaftesbury's fall, he was sworn in as Secretary to the Council of Trade and Foreign Plantations, with a salary of 500*l.* a year. This office he retained, notwithstanding the fall of his patron, till the dissolution of the Council on the 12th of March, 1674–75; but it appears that his salary was never paid.

On February 6, 1674–75, Locke proceeded to the degree of Bachelor of Medicine, having already been appointed to, or more probably promised, a Faculty Studentship at Ch. Ch., or, as Dean Prideaux, who had no love for him, puts it, "having wriggled into Ireland's faculty place." It is curious that his name does not appear in the Ch. Ch. books among the Faculty Students till the second quarter of 1675, and during that and the two subsequent quarters it is erased. The first time the name occurs without an erasure is in the first quarter of 1676. That there was much irregularity in the mode of appointing to College places at this time is evident.

His studentship being now secure, Lord Shaftesbury having, for a consideration in ready money, granted him an annuity of 100*l.* a year, and his estates in Somerestshire, as well as one or two loans and mortgages, bringing him in a modest sum in addition, Locke, notwithstanding the non-payment of his salary as Secretary to the Council of Trade and Plantations, must have been in fairly comfortable circumstances. He was dispensed from the necessity

of practising a profession, and, being also relieved from the pressure of public affairs, was free to follow his bent. It is probably to the leisure almost enforced upon him by the weakness of his health, as well as by the turn which public affairs had taken, and rendered possible by the independence of his position, that we are indebted for the maturity of reflection which forms so characteristic a feature of his subsequent writings.

CHAPTER III

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.—FURTHER RELATIONS WITH SHAFTESBURY.—EXPULSION FROM CHRIST CHURCH.

THE state of Locke's health had long rendered it desirable that he should reside in a warmer climate, and his release from official duties now removed any obstacle that there might formerly have been to his absence from England. The place which he selected for his retirement was Montpellier, at that time the most usual place of resort for invalids who were able to leave their own country. He left London about the middle of November, 1675, with one if not more companions, and, after experiencing the ordinary inconveniences of travel in those days of slow locomotion and poor inns, arrived at Paris on Nov. 24, and at Lyons on Dec. 11. At Lyons, he remarks of the library at the Jesuits' College that it "is the best that ever I saw, except Oxford, being one very high oblong square, with a gallery round, to come at the books." As before, in the North of Germany, so now in the South of France, he is a diligent observer of everything of interest, whether in the way of customs, occupations, or buildings, that falls in his way. He reached Montpellier on Christmas Day, and, except when making short excursions in the neighbourhood, resided there continuously till the early spring of 1677, a period of fourteen months. At Montpellier I have not been able to find any trace of him, either in the library or elsewhere, but his journal shows that he was much interested in the trade and products of the country, as well as in the objects which usually excite the curiosity of travellers. At Shaftesbury's instigation he wrote a little treatise, entitled, "Observations upon the Growth and Culture of Vines and Olives, the Production of Silk, and the Preservation of Fruits." It is curious that this small tract was never published till 1766. It enumerates no less than forty-one varieties of grapes, and thirteen varieties of olives, which were grown in the neighbourhood of Montpellier. The ceremonial and doings of the States of Languedoc attracted Locke's attention, but he does not seem to have been present at their deliberations. He witnessed, however, their devotions at the Church of Notre Dame, and remarks that the Cardinal Archbishop of Narbonne, who took part in the offices, kept "talking every now and then, and laughing with the bishops next him." The increasing incidence of the taxation on the lower

and middle orders, and the growing poverty of the people, were topics which could hardly fail to arrest the attention of any intelligent traveller at that time. "The rent of lands in France is fallen one half in these few years, by reason of the poverty of the people. Merchants and handicraftsmen pay near half their gains." Among the more interesting entries in his journal are the following:—March 18 (N.S.). "Monsieur Rennaie, a gentleman of the town, in whose house Sir J. Rushworth lay, about four years ago, sacrificed a child to the devil—a child of a servant of his own—upon a design to get some money. Several murders committed here since I came, and more attempted; one by a brother on his sister, in the house where I lay." March 22 (N.S.): "The new philosophy of Des Cartes prohibited to be taught in universities, schools, and academies." It is plain from the journal that Locke's mind was now busy with the class of questions which were afterwards treated in the Essay: reflections on space, the extent of possible knowledge, the objects and modes of study, etc., being curiously interspersed with his notes of travel. In respect of health, he does not seem to have benefited much by his stay at Montpellier, which, as before stated, he left in the early spring of 1677. By slow stages he travelled to Paris, where he joined a pupil, the son of Sir John Banks, who had been commended to his supervision by Shaftesbury. The tutorial engagement lasted for nearly two years, and, in consequence of it, Locke remained in France longer than he had originally intended. In a letter written to his old friend Mapletoft from Paris in June, 1677, after some playful allusions to Mapletoft's love affairs, he says:—"My health is the only mistress I have a long time courted, and is so coy a one that I think it will take up the remainder of my days to obtain her good graces and keep her in good humour." There can be no question that, at this time, the state of his health was a matter of very serious concern to him, and it may possibly have been the cause of his not marrying. While in Paris he probably took a pretty complete holiday, seeing the sights, however, making occasional excursions, forming new acquaintances, and exercising a general supervision over the education of his young charge.

At the end of June, 1678, Locke, accompanied probably by his pupil, left Paris with the view of making his way leisurely to Montpellier, and thence to Rome. He travelled westward by way of Orleans, Blois, and Angers. On the banks of the Loire he noticed the poverty-stricken appearance of the country. "Many of the towns they call bourgs; but, considering how poor and few the houses in most of them are, would in England scarce amount to villages. The houses generally were but one story. . . . The gentlemen's seats, of which we saw many, were most of them rather bearing marks of decay than of thriving and being well kept." Montpellier was reached early in October, and, after a short stay there, he went on to Lyons, with the view of commencing his journey to Rome. But the depth of the snow on Mont Cenis was fatal to this design. Twice Locke had formed plans to visit Rome,

"the time set, the company agreed," and both times he had been disappointed. "Were I not accustomed," he says, "to have fortune to dispose of me contrary to my design and expectation, I should be very angry to be thus turned out of my way, when I made sure in a few days to mount the Capitol and trace the footsteps of the Scipios and the Cæsars." He had now nothing left but to turn back to Paris, where he remained till the following April. Here he seems to have spent his time in the same miscellaneous occupations as before. In the journal we find the following entry, dated Feb. 13:—"I saw the library of M. de Thou, a great collection of choice, well-bound books, which are now to be sold; amongst others, a Greek manuscript, written by one Angelot, by which Stephens's Greek characters were first made." De Thou, the celebrated historian of his own times, is better known under his Latinized name, Thuanus. On a Friday, he notes:—"The observation of Lent at Paris is come almost to nothing. Meat is openly to be had in the shambles, and a dispensation commonly to be had from the curate without difficulty. People of sense laugh at it, and in Italy itself, for twenty sous, a dispensation is certainly to be had." Then follows an amusing story of "that Bishop of Bellay, who has writ so much against monks and monkery."

"A devout lady being sick, and besieged by the Carmes, made her will and gave them all: the Bishop of Bellay coming to see her, after it was done, asked whether she had made her will; she answered yes, and told him how; he convinced her it was not well, and she, desiring to alter it, found a difficulty how to do it, being so beset by the friars. The bishop bid her not trouble herself for it, but presently took order that two notaries, habited as physicians, should come to her. who being by her bedside, the bishop told the company it was convenient all should withdraw; and so the former will was revoked, and a new one made and put into the bishop's hands. The lady dies, the Carmes produce their will, and for some time the bishop lets them enjoy the pleasure of their inheritance; but at last, taking out the other will, he says to them, 'Mes frères, you are the sons of Elijah, children of the Old Testament, and have no share in the New.'"

It may have been the influence of fashion, and the eager thirst for reputation, which were so rife in Parisian society, that inspired, shortly after Locke's return to Paris, the following reflections, as profound as they are true:—

"The principal spring from which the actions of men take their rise, the rule they conduct them by, and the end to which they direct them, seems to be credit and reputation, and that which, at any rate, they avoid is in the greatest part shame and disgrace. This makes the Hurons and other people of Canada with such constancy endure inexpressible torments; this makes merchants in one country and soldiers in another; this puts men upon school divinity in one country and physics and mathematics in another; this cuts out the dresses for the women, and makes the fashions for the men, and makes them endure the inconveniences of all. . . . . Religions are upheld by this and factions maintained, and the shame of being disesteemed by those with whom one hath lived, and to

whom one would recommend oneself, is the great source and director of most of the actions of men. . . . He therefore that would govern the world well, had need consider rather what fashions he makes than what laws; and to bring anything into use he need only give it reputation."

Leaving Paris on the 22nd of April, 1679, Locke arrived, after his long absence, in London on the 30th of the same month. In the political world much had happened whilst he had been away. Shaftesbury, already in disgrace when he left England, had been imprisoned in the Tower for a year; but, by a sudden turn of fortune, was now reinstated in office as President of the newly-created Council. Of the circumstances which had brought about this change, the story of the Popish Plot, the discovery of the king's nefarious negotiations with Louis XIV., and the impeachment of Danby, it is not necessary here to speak. That Shaftesbury, when he saw the prospect of restoration to power, should wish to avail himself, as before, of Locke's advice and services, was only to be expected, and it was the expression of this desire which had hastened Locke's return to England. What, however, were the exact relations between the new Lord President and his former secretary during Shaftesbury's second tenure of office we are not informed. That the intercourse between them was close and frequent, there can be no doubt, and, during the summer months of 1679, Locke again resided in his patron's house. But the king soon felt himself strong enough to reassert his own will. Under date of the 15th of October, we read in the Privy Council Book, "The Earl of Shaftesbury's name was struck out of this list by his Majesty's command in Council." Consequently, Shaftesbury was again in opposition, and Locke, though still his adviser and friend, and frequently an inmate of one or other of his houses, was released from the pressure of official business. One of his principal cares at this time was the supervision of the education of Shaftesbury's grandson. The father, Locke's former pupil, "born a shapeless lump, like anarchy," seems to have been but a poor creature, and the little Anthony, when only three years old, was made over to the formal guardianship of his grandfather. Locke, though not his instructor, seems to have kept a vigilant eye on the boy's studies and discipline, as well as on his health and bodily training. If we may trust the memory of the third earl, writing when in middle life, Locke's care was extended to his brothers and sisters as well as to himself. "In our education," he says, "Mr. Locke governed according to his own principles, since published by him" [in the *Thoughts on Education*], "and with such success that we all of us came to full years with strong and healthy constitutions—my own the worst, though never faulty till of late. I was his more peculiar charge, being, as eldest son, taken by my grandfather and bred under his immediate care, Mr. Locke having the absolute direction of my education, and to whom, next my immediate parents, as I must own the greatest obligation, so I have ever preserved the highest gratitude and duty." The admiration and

gratitude which the author of the *Characteristics* felt for his tutor did not, however, prevent him from criticising freely Locke's *Theory of Ethics*, and pronouncing it "a very poor philosophy." Of the *Essay*, as a whole, notwithstanding his vigorous protest on this particular point, Shaftesbury seems to have had as high an opinion as of its author. "It may as well qualify for business and the world as for the sciences and a university. No one has done more towards the recalling of philosophy from barbarity into use and practice of the world, and into the company of the better and politer sort, who might well be ashamed of it in its other dress. No one has opened a better or clearer way to reasoning." (See the Letters of the third Earl of Shaftesbury to a Student at the University, Letters I., VIII.)

Of the parliament which met at Oxford on the 21st of March, 1680–81, Locke was a close, and must have been an anxious, observer. He himself occupied his rooms at Christ Church, and for Shaftesbury's use he obtained the house of the celebrated mathematician, Dr. Wallis. The fullest account we have of the earlier proceedings of this parliament are contained in a letter from Locke to Stringer, Shaftesbury's secretary. It was prematurely dissolved on the 28th of March, Charles having succeeded in obtaining supplies from the French king instead of from his own subjects, and no other parliament was summoned during the remainder of the reign.

So suspicious of treachery had the rival parties in the State now become, that most of the members of the Oxford parliament had been attended by armed servants, while the king was protected by a body of guards. The political tension was, of course, by no means relaxed, when it became plain that the king intended to govern without a parliament, and we can hardly feel surprised that ministers took the initiative in trying to silence their opponents. On the 2nd of July, 1681, Shaftesbury was arrested in his London house on a charge of high treason, and. after a brief examination before the Council, was committed to the tower. Notwithstanding many attempts, he failed to obtain a trial till Nov. 24, when he was indicted before a special commission at the Old Bailey. The grand jury, amidst the plaudits of the spectators, threw out the bill, and on the 1st of December following he was released on bail. Shaftesbury's acquittal was received in London, and throughout the country, with acclamations of joy, but his triumph was only a brief one. The rest of his story is soon told. In the summer of 1682, Shaftesbury, Monmouth, Russell, and a few others began to concert measures for a general rising against the king. The scheme was, of course, discovered, and Shaftesbury, knowing that, from the new composition of the juries, he would have no chance of escape if another indictment were preferred against him, took to flight, and concealed himself for some weeks in obscure houses in the city and in Wapping. Meanwhile he tried, from his hiding-places, to foment an insurrection, but, when he found that the day which had been fixed on for the general rising had been

postponed, he determined to seek safety for himself by escaping to Holland. After some adventures on the way, he reached Amsterdam in the beginning of December. To preserve him from extradition, he was on his petition admitted a citizen of Amsterdam, and might thus, like Locke, have lived to see the Revolution, but on the 21st of January, 1682–83, he died, in excruciating agonies, of gout in the stomach.

There is no evidence to implicate Locke in Shaftesbury's design of setting the Duke of Monmouth on the throne, though it is difficult to suppose that he was not acquainted with it. Any way, in the spring of 1681–82, he seems to have been engaged in some mysterious political movements, the nature of which is unknown to us. Humphrey Prideaux, afterwards Dean of Norwich, in his gossiping letters to John Ellis, afterwards an Under-Secretary of State, frequently mentions Locke, who was at this time residing in Oxford. These notices were probably in answer to queries from Ellis, who was already in the employment of the government. From Prideaux's letters (recently published by the Camden Society) I extract a few passages, interesting not only as throwing light on Locke's mode of life at this period in Oxford, but also as showing the estimate of him formed by a political enemy who was a member of the same college:—

"*March* 14, 1681 (o. s.).—John Locke lives a very cunning and unintelligible life here, being two days in town and three out; and no one knows where he goes, or when he goes, or when he returns. Certainly there is some Whig intrigue a managing; but here not a word of politics comes from him, nothing of news or anything else concerning our present affair, as if he were not at all concerned in them.

"*March* 19, 1681 (o. s.).—Where J. L. goes I cannot by any means learn, all his voyages being so cunningly contrived. He hath in his last sally been absent at least ten days, where I cannot learn. Last night he returned; and sometimes he himself goes out and leaves his man behind, who shall then to be often seen in the quadrangle, to make people believe his master is at home, for he will let no one come to his chamber, and therefore it is not certain when he is there or when he is absent. I fancy there are projects afoot.

"*October* 24, 1682.—John Locke lives very quietly with us, and not a word ever drops from his mouth that discovers anything of his heart within. Now his master is fled, I suppose we shall have him altogether. He seems to be a man of very good converse, and that we have of him with content; as for what else he is he keeps it to himself, and therefore troubles not us with it nor we him."

After Shaftesbury's dismissal from the Presidentship of the Council, Locke must have had a considerable amount of leisure. The state of his health, however, and the consequent necessity of his frequently changing his residence, must have interfered a good deal with the progress of his studies. It is plain from his correspondence that he still took a lively interest in scientific and medical pursuits, nor does he appear to have yet given up the hope of practising medicine in a regular way. By his friends he was

usually called Dr. Locke, and at the period of life we are now considering he still continued to attend cases, and to make elaborate notes of treatment and diagnosis.

It is probable that about this time Locke wrote the first of the *Two Treatises on Government*, which were published in 1690. Materials for the Essay were, undoubtedly, being slowly accumulated, and on a variety of questions, political, educational, ethical, theological, and philosophical, his views were being gradually matured. Several pamphlets of a political character were, during these years, attributed to him, but we have his own solemn asseveration, in a letter written to the Earl of Pembroke in November, 1684, that he was not the author "of any pamphlet or treatise whatever, in part good, bad, or indifferent;" that is, of course, of any published pamphlet or treatise, for he had already written a good deal in the way of essays, reflections, and commonplaces.

After Shaftesbury's flight, Locke must have found his position becoming more and more unpleasant. During the year 1682 he had resided pretty constantly in Oxford, but we can well understand that Oxford was not then a very eligible place of residence for a whig and a latitudinarian. He appears to have left it for good at the end of June or beginning of July, 1683, and to have retired for a while into Somersetshire. Shortly afterwards, however, he quitted England altogether, and when we next hear of him it is in Holland. That he was implicated in the Rye House plot is, on every ground, most improbable, notwithstanding the malicious insinuations of Prideaux to the contrary. Nor is there any evidence that he had any concern with the more respectable conspiracy of Monmouth, Russell, and Sidney. But in those times of plots and counter-plots, and arbitrary interference with the courts of justice, any man who was in opposition to the government might well be in fear for his life or liberty. Specially would this be the case with Locke, who was well known as a friend and adherent of Shaftesbury. Moreover, had he been thrown into prison, the state of his health was such that his life would probably have been endangered. His flight, therefore, affords no countenance whatsoever to the supposition that he had been engaged in treasonable designs against the government. It would, I conceive, be no stain on Locke's character, had he, in those days of misgovernment and oppression, conspired to effect by violent means a change in the succession, or even a transference of the crown. But the fact that there is no evidence of his having done so removes almost all excuse for the tyrannical act which I am presently about to describe. In connection with Locke's flight to Holland, it may be mentioned that the idea of leaving England was by no means new to him. The proposal to emigrate together to Carolina or the Ile de Bourbon, possibly, however, thrown out half in jest, is a frequent topic in the correspondence with his French friend, Thoynard, during the two or three years succeeding his return from France. That he was becoming disgusted with the political game then being played in England, and despondent as to the

future of his country, is evident from several letters written by him at this time.

The account of Locke's life in Holland may be deferred to the next chapter. It will be convenient here to tell the story of his expulsion from Christ Church, which marks the issue of his connection with Shaftesbury, and of the part which he had so far taken in English politics. We have already seen that he was suspected of having written a number of political pamphlets against the government. This suspicion was not unnatural, Locke being a literary man and a well-known friend of Shaftesbury. After his retirement to Holland, the suspicion of his having written various pamphlets, supposed to have been printed in that country, and surreptitiously conveyed into England, was one which very naturally occurred, and, according to Prideaux, he was now specially suspected of having written "a most bitter libel, published in Holland in English, Dutch, and French, called a Hue and Cry after the Earl of Essex's murder." But the government had no proof of these surmises, and therefore no right to take action upon them. Their suspicions were, however, probably sharpened by the malicious reports of their spies in Oxford, and by the not unlikely supposition that Locke was taking part in the intrigues, on behalf of Monmouth, now being carried on in Holland. For the latter suspicion, as for the one with regard to the authorship of the pamphlets, it happens that there was no justification, but it is impossible to deny that there was some *primâ facie* ground for it. Compared with other arbitrary acts of the reigns of Charles II. and James II., the measures taken against Locke do not seem exceptionally severe, utterly abhorrent as they would doubtless be to the usages of a constitutional age.

About fourteen or fifteen months had elapsed since his disappearance from England, when, on the 6th of November, 1684, Lord Sunderland signified to Dr. Fell, Dean of Christ Church, who was also Bishop of Oxford, the pleasure of the king that Locke should be removed from his studentship, asking the Dean at the same time to specify "the method of doing it." "The method" adopted by the Dean was to attach a "moneo" to the screen in the college hall, summoning Locke to appear on the 1st of January following, to answer the charges against him. After admitting that Locke, as having a physician's place among the students, was not obliged to residence, and that he was abroad upon want of health, the Dean, in his reply to Sunderland, proceeds to show his readiness to accommodate himself to the requirements of the court: "Notwithstanding that, I have summoned him to return home, which is done with this prospect, that if he comes not back, he will be liable to expulsion for contumacy; if he does, he will be answerable to your lordship for what he shall be found to have done amiss." Ingenious, however, as the "method" was, it was not expeditious enough to satisfy the court. A second letter from Sunderland, enjoining Locke's immediate expulsion, was at once despatched. This curious document is still shown in the Christ Church library,

and, as I have never seen an exact transcript of it, I here subjoin one:

"*To the Right Reverend Father in God, John, Lord Bishop of Oxon, Dean of Christ Church, and our trusty and well-beloved the Chapterthere.*

"Right Reverend Father in God, and trusty and well-beloved, we greet you well. Whereas we have received information of that actious and disloyall behaviour of Lock, one of the students of that our Colledge; we have thought fit hereby to signify our will and pleasure to you, that you forthwith remove him from his said student's place, and deprive him of all the rights and advantages thereunto belonging. For which this shall be your warrant. And so we bid you heartily farewell.

"Given at our Court at Whitehall, 11th day of November, 1684, in the six and thirtieth year of our Reigne.

"By his Majesty's command, SUNDERLAND."

On the 16th of November the Dean signified that his Majesty's command was fully executed, whereupon Lord Sunderland acquainted him that his Majesty was well satisfied with the college's ready obedience.

Thus the most celebrated man, perhaps, that Oxford has sheltered within her walls since the Reformation was summarily ejected at the dictation of a corrupt and arbitrary court. The Dean and Chapter might have won our admiration had they resisted the royal command, as was done in the next reign by the Fellows of Magdalen College, but it was hardly to be expected that they should risk their own goods and liberties in attempting to afford a protection which, after all, would have been almost certainly attempted in vain. Moreover, as Lord Grenville (*Oxford and Locke*) has pointed out, Christ Church being a royal foundation, the Dean and Chapter might well regard the king as having full power either to appoint or remove any member of the foundation, and themselves as only registering his decree. The same power, as we have already seen, had been exercised in Locke's favour by the dispensation from entering holy orders accorded by the crown in 1666.

After the Revolution, Locke petitioned William the Third for the restitution of his studentship, but "finding," according to Lady Masham, that "it would give great disturbance to the society, and dispossess the person that was in his place, he desisted from that pretension."

In Fell's first letter to Sunderland, he speaks of Locke's extreme reserve and taciturnity. As this seems to have been one of his distinguishing characteristics, and as the passage is otherwise remarkable, as showing the vigilance with which Locke was watched at Oxford, I give it at length:

"I have for divers years had an eye upon him; but so close has his guard been on himself that, after several strict inquiries, I may confidently affirm there is not any one in the College, however familiar with him, who has heard him speak a word either against or so much as concerning the Government; and although very frequently, both in public and in private,

discourses have been purposely introduced to the disparagement of his master, the Earl of Shaftesbury, his party and design, he could never be provoked to take any notice or discover in word or look the least concern; so that I believe there is not in the world such a master of taciturnity and passion."

This account of Locke's reserve, as well as the illustration here incidentally afforded of the abominable system of college espionage which then prevailed in Oxford, is amply confirmed by Prideaux's letters to Ellis. In the *Thoughts on Education* parents and tutors are recommended to mould children betimes to this mastery over their tongues. But the gift of silence was exercised by Locke only in those matters where other men have no right to be inquisitive or curious—matters of private concernment and of individual opinion. In conversation on general topics, he seems always to have been open and copious. His taciturnity, though the effect of prudence and self-control, was certainly not due to any lack of geniality or any want of sympathy with others.

CHAPTER IV.

RESIDENCE IN HOLLAND. — THE REVOLUTION. — RETURN TO ENGLAND. — PUBLICATION OF THE "ESSAY" AND OTHER WORKS.

LOCKE must have landed in Holland in one of the autumn months of 1683, being then about fifty-one years of age. We are not able, however, to trace any of his movements till the January of 1683–84, when he was present, by invitation of Peter Guenellon, the principal physician of Amsterdam, at the dissection of a lioness which had been killed by the intense cold of the winter.

Through Guenellon, whom he had met during his stay in Paris, he must have made the acquaintance of the principal literary and scientific men at that time residing in or near Amsterdam. Amongst these was Philip van Limborch, then professor of theology among the Arminians or Remonstrants. The Arminians (called Remonstrants on account of the remonstrance which they had presented to the States-General in 1610) were the latitudinarians of Holland, and, though they had been condemned by the Synod of Dort in 1619, and had been subjected to a bitter persecution by the Calvinist clergy for some years following, were now a fairly numerous body, possessing a theological seminary, and exercising a considerable influence, not only in their own country, but over the minds of the more liberal theologians throughout Europe. The undogmatic, tolerant, and, if I may use the expression, ethical character of the Remonstrant theology must have had great attractions for Locke, and he and Limborch, united by many common sentiments, subsequently became fast friends.

In the autumn of 1684 Locke made a tour of the country, noting, as was usual with him, all objects and matters of interest, and evidently benefiting much in health by the diversion of travelling. Indeed, we are somewhat surprised to hear that his health derived more advantage from the air of Holland than from that of Montpellier. What, however, he put down to climate was, perhaps, at least equally due to pleasant companionship, and to the variety of interests—political, commercial, literary, and theological—which the Dutch nation at that time so pre-eminently afforded. Amongst the objects which attracted his attention was a sect of communistic mystics established near Leeuwarden. "They receive," he says, "all ages, sexes, and degrees, upon approbation. They live all in common; and whoever is admitted is to give with himself all he

has to Christ the Lord—that is, the Church—to be managed by officers appointed by the Church. These people, however, were very shy to give an account of themselves to strangers, and they appeared inclined to dispense their instruction only to those whom 'the Lord,' as they say, 'had disposed to it,' and in whom they saw 'signs of grace;' which 'signs of grace' seem to me to be, at last, a perfect submission to the will and rules of their pastor, Mr. Yonn, who, if I mistake not, has established to himself a perfect empire over them. For though their censures and all their administrations be in appearance in their Church, yet it is easy to perceive how at last it determines in him. He is *dominus factotum;* and though I believe they are, generally speaking, people of very good and exemplary lives, yet the tone of voice, manner, and fashion of those I conversed with seemed to make one suspect a little of Tartuffe." After Locke's experiences of the Puritan ministers in his life, the character of Mr. Yonn was, probably, by no means new to him, though he now repeated his acquaintance with it under novel circumstances.

In November Locke was again in Amsterdam, and here he heard of Dr. Fell's "moneo," summoning him back to Christ Church. At first it would seem that he resolved to comply with it, but the intelligence of the "moneo" must soon have been followed by that of his deprivation, and thus he was saved from the dangers which might have befallen him had he returned to England. In more ways than one, his continued absence abroad was probably an advantage to him. "In Holland," says Lady Masham, "he had full leisure to prosecute his thoughts on the subject of *Human Understanding*—a work which, in probability, he never would have finished had he continued in England." The winter of this year was spent in Utrecht and devoted to study—probably to the preparation of the *Essay on Human Understanding*. But this quiet mode of life was quickly coming to an end. On the 6th of Frbruary, 1684–85, Charles the Second had died; and, though the succession of the Duke of York was at first undisputed, Monmouth, the natural son of the late king, was soon persuaded by his impatient and injudicious followers to head the insurrection which resulted in his defeat and execution. From Monmouth's intrigues Locke had always held aloof, "having no such high opinion of the Duke of Monmouth as to expect anything from his undertaking." But prudence, in those days of fierce political hatred and unblushing fabrications, was often of very little avail. Locke was well known as an adherent of Shaftesbury, and Shaftesbury had long and ardently favoured Monmouth's pretensions. Moreover, stories tending to discredit him with the advisers of the Court, and to connect his name with the plots of the other exiles, were probably circulating pretty freely at this time. On the 7th of May—a few days after Argyle had set out on his ill-starred expedition to Scotland, and while Monmouth was still preparing for his descent on the west coast of England—Colonel Skelton, who had been sent over as a special envoy to the Hague, presented to the States-General a list

of persons regarded as dangerous by the English Government, and demanded their surrender. On this list Locke's name stood last, having been added, we are told, by Sir George Downing, the English representative at the Dutch Court, but whether or not in pursuance of further instructions from home we do not know. Locke was at this time living at Utrecht, and it was at once arranged that he should be concealed in the house of Dr. Veen, of Amsterdam, the father-in-law of his old acquaintance, Dr. Guenellon. Though it was necessary, for appearance' sake, that he should keep strictly to his hiding-place, he does not seem to have incurred any real danger. The municipal authorities of Amsterdam had too great a horror of Popery and too much sympathy with liberty to show any marked zeal in carrying out the wishes of the English king; nor does the Prince of Orange himself appear to have been very eager to hunt out the fugitives, provided they went through the decent ceremony of concealing themselves from the ministers of justice. To Locke the confinement was doubtless irksome; but he was solaced by the visits of his friends, especially of Limborch, and the monotony of his solitude was broken by a visit of a few weeks to Cleve. Here, however, he does not appear to have felt so safe as at Amsterdam; and, consequently, he soon returned to his old quarters, assuming the name of Dr. Van der Linden, as at Cleve he had assumed that of Lamy. Meanwhile, two of his friends in England—William Penn, the celebrated Quaker, and the Earl of Pembroke, to whom he afterwards dedicated the *Essay*—were moving the king for a pardon. The latter, writing to Locke on the 20th of August, informs him that the king "bid me write to you to come over; I told him I would then bring you to kiss his hand, and he was fully satisfied I should." Locke, however, appears to have had little confidence in the king's sincerity, and, perhaps, no desire to compromise any political action that might be open to him in the future by making formal submission to a monarch who was tolerably certain to work out his own ruin. He still remained in concealment, and replied that, "having been guilty of no crime, he had no occasion for a pardon." But in May, 1686, all fear of arrest was removed by the appearance of a new proclamation of the States-General, in which his name was not included, and henceforth he was enabled to move about with perfect freedom.

The name of Limborch, one of the friends whom Locke made in Holland, has already been mentioned. A long series of letters which passed between them, beginning with Locke's arrival at Cleve in September, 1685, and ending only a few weeks before his death, is still extant, though some are still unpublished. This correspondence is interesting, not only as throwing light on Locke's pursuits, but also as affording a free expression of his theological opinions. Thus, in a letter written to Limborch soon after his arrival at Cleve, with reference to a work recently published by Le Clerc, he acknowledges his perplexities respecting the plenary inspiration of the Bible. "If all things which are contained in the sacred books are equally to be regarded as inspired, without any

distinctions, then we give philosophers a great handle for doubting of our faith and sincerity. If, on the contrary, some things are to be regarded as purely human, how shall we establish the divine authority of the Scriptures, without which the Christian religion will fall to the ground? What shall be our criterion? Where shall we draw the line?" He applies to Limborch for help. "For many things which occur in the canonical books, long before I read this treatise, have made me anxious and doubtful, and I shall be most grateful if you could remove my scruples." From the character of his theological writings, composed during the latter years of his life, it would appear that these scruples were afterwards either removed or set aside.

With Le Clerc (Joannes Clericus) himself Locke first became personally acquainted after his return to Amsterdam in the winter of 1685–86. Le Clerc was still young, having been born at Geneva in 1657, but he had already acquired considerable reputation both as a philosopher and as a theologian. As a philosopher, he had at first embraced the doctrines of Descartes, but in after-life he leaned rather to those views which, a few years after the time of which I am writing, became famous by the publication of Locke's *Essay*. As a divine, his theology was liberal and critical beyond even that of the Remonstrant School. He questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, regarded some of the books of the old Testament as of purely human origin, and, in his treatment of the miracles and of Christian doctrine, rationalised so far as to expose himself to the charge of Socinianism, though he himself warmly repudiated the imputation. In literary activity and enterprise he yielded to no other author of the age. Such a man, full of energy and of novel views, ready to entertain and discuss any question of interest in theology, criticism, or philosophy, must have been peculiarly acceptable to an exile like Locke, whose mind was now engaged with just the same problems that were occupying Le Clerc. The intimacy between the two students, though never so affectionate as that between Locke and Limborch, soon became a close one. Though widely separated in age, and though differing, probably, in many of their specific opinions, they were conscious that they were travelling the same road—a way then little frequented—the way which led from the received tenets of the churches and the schools to the arena of free inquiry and impartial investigation.

In the winter of 1685–86, Locke, while still hiding in Dr. Veen's house, employed himself in writing the famous *Epistola de Tolerantia*, addressed to Limborch. This tract was not, however, published till 1689, when it was almost immediately translated into English, Dutch, and French. Of the opinions expressed in this and the other letters on Toleration I shall have occasion to speak hereafter, when describing Locke's theological views. It must be recollected that, though now in his fifty-fourth year, he had as yet published nothing of any importance. He had, indeed, for several years been slowly putting together the materials for many books; but it is possible that his natural modesty, together with what seems

to have been an excessive prudence, might have prevented him from giving any of his thoughts to the world, at least during his lifetime, had it not been for the fortunate circumstances which brought him into contact with Le Clerc. At the time when the two friends were introduced to one another, Le Clerc was projecting the *Bibliothèque Universelle*, one of the earliest literary and scientific reviews, and to this Locke soon became a constant contributor. In the July number of 1686 appears his method of a Commonplace Book, under the title, *Méthode Nouvelle de dresser des Recueils*. The ice was now broken, and from this time onwards we shall find his publications follow one another in rapid succession.

In September, 1686, Locke moved again to Utrecht, intending, apparently, to make a prolonged residence there; but in December, for some mysterious reason with which we are not acquainted, though connected in all probability with English politics, he was threatened with expulsion from the city, and was obliged to return to Amsterdam. It seems, from his correspondence with Limborch, that he did not wish this expulsion to be talked about. At the same time he accepted stoically the inconveniences to which it put him. "These are the sports of fortune, or rather the ordinary chances of human life, which come as naturally as wind and rain to travellers." At Amsterdam he remained for two months as the guest of his old friend, Dr. Guenellon, and then removed to Rotterdam, where, with occasional breaks, he resided during the rest of his stay in Holland. This removal was undoubtedly connected with the turn which English politics were now taking at the Dutch Court. Monmouth being now out of the way, the only quarter to which those who were weary of the Stuart despotism could look for redress was the House of Orange. Secret negotiations were at this time going on with the Prince and Princess, and there can be no doubt that Locke was taking an active share in the schemes that were in preparation. Rotterdam was within a short distance of the Hague, and also a convenient place for carrying on a correspondence with England as well as for meeting the Englishmen who landed in Holland. As soon as Locke arrived at Rotterdam his hands seem to have been tolerably full of political business. Writing to Limborch in February, 1686–87, he says, "To politics I gave but little thought at Amsterdam; here I cannot pay much attention to literature." Mr. Fox-Bourne conjectures that it was through Lord Mordaunt, afterwards Earl of Peterborough, who shortly before this time had taken up his residence in Holland, that Locke was brought into personal relations with the Prince and Princess. Any way, these relations gradually ripened into friendship, and a mutual feeling of respect and admiration seems soon to have grown up between him and the royal couple.

While at Rotterdam, Locke resided with Benjamin Furly, an English Quaker, who was a merchant of considerable wealth and a great book-collector. At Furly's death, in 1714, the sale-catalogue of his books occupied nearly 400 pages. Locke was thus at no loss for the instruments of his trade, and notwithstanding his preoccupation

in politics, he seems to have been working with fair assiduity at the *Essay* and on other literary subjects. In the number of the *Bibliothèque Universelle* for January, 1687–88, appeared an abstract of the *Essay*, translated into French by Le Clerc, from a manuscript written by Locke, which is still extant. The epitome was announced as communicated by Monsieur Locke, and a note was appended inviting criticisms, if anything false, obscure, or defective were remarked in the system. After the review had appeared, separate copies of the epitome were struck off, and the opuscule, with a short dedication to the Earl of Pembroke, was published in a separate form. Locke went to Amsterdam for the purpose of superintending the printing of the epitome, and appears to have been sorely tried by the "drunken" and "lying" workmen, who, however, were all "good Christians," "orthodox believers," and "marked for salvation by the distinguishing L that stands on their door-posts, or the funeral sermon that they may have for a passport if they will go to the charge of it." On the 29th of February he returned to Furly's house, where he seems to have lived in great comfort, and on most intimate and affectionate terms with the family. One of the sons, a little boy of four or five years old, named Arent, was a special favorite, and is playfully alluded to in the letters to Furly as "my little friend!" Kindness to children seems always to have been one of Locke's characteristics, as it is of all men of simple manners and warm hearts.

It was on the 1st of November, 1688, that William of Orange set out on his expedition to England. Locke still remained in Holland, and appears to have had frequent interviews with the Princess Mary, who was waiting till she could with safety join her husband. At last the word was given from England, and, after being detained for some time by unfavourable weather, the royal party, accompanied by Locke and Lady Mordaunt, left the Hague on the 11th of February, 1688–89. They arrived at Greenwich on the following day. It was with mixed feelings that Locke took leave of the country where he had been entertained so long, and where he had formed so many warm and congenial friendships. Writing to Limborch shortly before his departure, he says, "There are many considerations which urge me not to miss this opportunity of sailing; the expectation of my friends; my private affairs, which have now been long neglected; the number of pirates in the channel; and the charge of the noble lady (Lady Mordaunt) with whom I am about to travel. But I trust that you will believe me when I say that I have found here another country, and I might almost say, other relations; for all that is dearest in that expression—good-will, love, kindness—bonds that are stronger than blood—I have experienced amongst you. It is owing to this fellow-feeling, which has always been shown to me by your countrymen, that, though absent from my own people and exposed to every kind of trouble, I have never yet felt sick at heart."* Still, it must have been with

* It should be mentioned, perhaps, that the correspondence between Locke and Limborch is in Latin.

a thrill of delight that, after an absence of more than five years, he once more stepped on the shores of his native land, and felt that a new era of liberty and glory had dawned for her.

About a week after his arrival in England, Locke was offered, through Lord Mordaunt, the post of ambassador to Frederick the First, Elector of Brandenburgh. The letter to Lord Mordaunt, in which he declines the post, shows the feeble condition in which, notwithstanding all his precautions, his health still continued. "It is the most touching displeasure I have ever received from that weak and broken constitution of my health, which has so long threatened my life, that it now affords me not a body suitable to my mind in so desirable an occasion of serving his Majesty. . . . What shall a man do in the necessity of application and variety of attendance on business who sometimes, after a little motion, has not breath to speak, and cannot borrow an hour or two of watching from the night without repaying it with a great waste of time the next day?" But there was another reason, besides his health, why he could not accept a mission to the Court of Brandenburgh. "If I have reason to apprehend the cold air of the country, there is yet another thing in it as inconsistent with my constitution, and that is their warm drinking." It was true that he might oppose obstinate refusal, but then that would be to take more care of his own health than of the king's business. "It is no small matter in such stations to be acceptable to the people one has to do with, in being able to accommodate one's self to their fashions; and I imagine, whatever I may do there myself, the knowing what others are doing is at least one half of my business, and I know no such rack in the world to draw out men's thoughts as a well-managed bottle. If, therefore, it were fit for me to advise in this case, I should think it more for the king's interest to send a man of equal parts that could drink his share than the soberest man in the kingdom." But, though Locke shrank from this post, the importance of which could hardly be exaggerated, for Frederick was the ally on whom William most confided in his opposition to Louis the Fourteenth, he was ready to place his services at the disposal of the Government for domestic work. "If there be anything wherein I may flatter myself I have attained any degree of capacity to serve his Majesty, it is in some little knowledge I perhaps may have in the constitutions of my country, the temper of my countrymen, and the divisions amongst them, whereby I persuade myself I may be more useful to him at home, though I cannot but see that such an employment would be of greater advantage to myself abroad, would but my health assent to it." The disinterested patriotism of this letter was only of a piece with the whole of Locke's political life. He was next offered the embassy to Vienna, and, in fact, invited to name any diplomatic appointment which he would be prepared to accept: but he regarded his health as an insuperable bar to work of this kind at so critical a time in the history of Europe. Having declined all foreign employment, he was now named a Commis-

sioner of Appeals, an office with small emolument and not much work, which he appears to have retained during the remainder of his life. This office seems to have been given to him partly as a compensation for the arrears of salary due under the late Government; for, with an exhausted exchequer, it was impossible to satisfy such claims by immediate payment.

Locke's health suffered considerably by his return to London. Writing to Limborch shortly after his arrival, and complaining of the worry caused him by the pressure of private affairs and public business, the climax of all his grievances, we are hardly surprised to find, is the injury to his health "from the pestilent smoke of this city" (*Malignus hujus urbis fumus*). Amongst the public affairs which claimed his attention, the foremost, doubtless, was the attempt then being made to widen the basis of the National Church by a measure of comprehension, as well as to relieve of civil disabilities the more extreme or scrupulous of the sectaries by what was called a measure of indulgence or toleration. Locke, of course, with his friend Lord Mordaunt, took the most liberal side open to him as respects these measures; but he complains that the episcopal clergy were unfavourable to these as well as to other reforms, whether to their own advantage and that of the State it was for them to consider. Unfortunately both for the Church and nation, the issue of the religious struggles which were carried on at the beginning of William's reign was, on the whole, in favor of the less tolerant party. The Comprehension Bill, after being violently attacked and languidly defended, was dropped altogether. The Toleration Bill, though passed by pretty general consent and affording a considerable measure of relief on the existing law, was entirely of the nature of a compromise, and what we should now note as most remarkable in it is the number of its provisos and exceptions. No relief was granted to the believer in transubstantiation or the disbeliever in the Trinity. No dissenting minister, moreover, was allowed to exercise his vocation unless he subscribed thirty-four out of the Thirty-nine Articles, together with the greater part of two others. The Quakers had to make a special declaration of belief in the Holy Trinity and in the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. The measure of toleration which Locke would have been prepared to grant, it need hardly be said, far exceeded that which was accorded by the Act. Speaking of the law recently passed in a letter to Limborch on the 6th of June, he uses apologetic language. "Toleration has indeed been granted, but not with that latitude which you and men like you, true Christians without ambition or envy, would desire. But it is something to have got thus far. On these beginnings I hope are laid the foundations of liberty and peace on which the Church of Christ will hereafter be established." In a subsequent letter, speaking again of the same law, he says, "People will always differ from one another about religion, and carry on constant strife and war, until the right of every one to perfect liberty in these matters is conceded, and they can be united in one

body by a bond of mutual charity." If there be any truth in the tradition to which Lord King alludes, that Locke himself negotiated the terms of the Toleration Act, he must have regarded it simply as an instalment of religious liberty, the utmost that could be procured under the circumtances, and an earnest of better things to come.

On William's accession to the throne, one only of the English Sees was vacant, the Bishopric of Salisbury. To this he nominated the famous Gilbert Burnet, who had been one of his advisers in Holland. Locke, in one of his letters to Limborch, tells a rather malicious story of the new prelate. When he paid his first visit to the king after his consecration, his majesty observed that his hat was a good deal larger than usual, and asked him what was the object of so very much brim. The bishop replied that it was the shape suitable to his dignity. " I hope," answered the king, "that the hat won't turn your head."

The topic that most interested Locke probably at this time, next to the political regeneration of his country, was the approaching publication of the *Essay*. The work must have been finished, or all but finished, when he left Holland. In May, 1689, he wrote the dedication to the Earl of Pembroke, and the printing commenced shortly afterwards. The proof-sheets were sent to Le Clerc. As before at Amsterdam, the printers appear to have caused him some trouble, but the book was in the booksellers' shops early in 1690. It is a fine folio, " printed by Eliz. Holt for Thomas Basset at the George in Fleet Street, near St. Dunstan's Church." Locke received 30*l.* for the copy-right. But when we remember that Milton only lived to receive 10*l.* for *Paradise Lost*, we cannot feel much surprise at Locke's rate of payment. The days when authorship was to become a lucrative profession were still far distant in England.

Previously to the publication of the *Essay*, in the spring of 1689, the *Epistola de Tolerantiâ* had appeared at Gouda, in Holland; but it was published anonymously, and appearently without Locke's knowledge, the responsibility of giving it to the world being undertaken by Limborch, to whom it had been addressed. On the title page are some mysterious letters, the invention, probably, of Limborch; " Epistola de Tolerantia ad Clarissimum Virum T.A.R.P. T.O.L.A. Scripta a P.A.P.O.I.L.A." These being interpreted are, " Theologiæ Apud Remonstrantes Professorem, Tyrannidis Osorem, Limborchium Amstelodamensem ;" and " Pacis Amico, Persecutionis Osore, Joanne Lockio Anglo." Dutch and French translations were issued almost immediately, and the book at once created considerable discussion on the Continent : but it does not at the first appear to have excited much attention in England. Locke himself was for some time unable to obtain a copy. In the course of the year, however, it was translated into English by one William Popple, an Unitarian merchant residing in London. In the preface the translator, alluding to recent legislation, says, " We

have need of more generous remedies than what have yet been made use of in our distemper. It is neither declarations of indulgence nor acts of comprehension, such as have as yet been practised or projected amongst us, that can do the work. Absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty, is the thing that we stand in need of."

Locke affords a curious instance of a man who, having carefully shunned publication up to a late period of life, then gave forth a series of works in rapid succession. It would seem as if he had long mistrusted his own powers, or as if he had doubted of the expediency of at once seeking a wide circulation for his views, but that, having once ventured to reveal himself to the public, he was emboldened, if not impelled, to proceed. Early in 1690, there appeared not only the *Essay*, but also the *Two Treatises of Government*. These were published anonymously, but it must soon have been known that Locke was their author. For reasons which I have given in another chapter, the former of the two treatises, which is a criticism of Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, seems to have been written between 1680 and 1685, the latter during the concluding period of Locke's stay in Holland, while the English Revolution was being prepared and consummated.

The translation of the Epistle on Toleration soon provoked a lively controversy. To one answer, that by Jonas Proast, Locke replied in a *Second Letter concerning Toleration*, signed by Philanthropus, and dated May 27, 1690. Proast, as the manner is in such controversies, replied again, and Locke wrote a *Third Letter for Toleration*, again signed Philanthropus, and dated June 20, 1692. After many years' silence, Proast wrote a rejoinder in 1704, and to this Locke replied in the *Fourth Letter for Toleration*, which, however, he did not live to publish, or, indeed, to complete. It appeared amongst his Posthumous Works. These Letters on Toleration doubtless exercised great influence in their day, and probably contributed, in large measure, to bring about the more enlightened views on this subject which in this country, at least, are now all but universal.

The authorship of the Letters on Toleration, though it could hardly fail to be pretty generally known, was first distinctly acknowledged by Locke in the codicil to his will. Limborch, on being hard pressed, had divulged it, in the spring of 1690. to Guenellon and Veen, but they appear, contrary to what generally happens in such cases, to have kept the secret to themselves. Locke, however, was much irritated at the indiscretion of Limborch, and for once wrote him an angry letter. "If you had entrusted me with a secret of this kind I would not have divulged it to relation, or friend, or any mortal being, under any circumstances whatsoever. You do not know the trouble into which you have brought me." It is not easy to see why Locke should have felt so disquieted at the prospect of his authorship being discovered, but it may be that he hoped to bring about some extension of the limits of the Toleration Act

which had been passed in the preceding year, and that he feared that his hands might be tied by the discovery that he entertained what, at that time, would be regarded as such extreme views; or it may have been simply that he was afraid, if his authorship were once acknowledged, of being dragged into a long and irksome controversy with the bigots of the various ecclesiastical parties which were then endeavoring to maintain or recover their ascendancy.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE AT OATES.—FRIENDSHIPS.—FURTHER PUBLICATIONS.

SHORTLY after Locke returned to England, he settled down in lodgings in the neighbourhood of what is now called Cannon Row, Westminster. But the fogs and smoke of London then, as now, were not favourable to persons of delicate health, and he seems to have been glad of any opportunity of breathing the country air. Amongst his places of resort were Parson's Green, the suburban residence of Lord Mordaunt, now Earl of Monmouth, and Oates, a manor-house, in the parish of High Laver, in Essex, the seat of Sir Francis and Lady Masham, situated in a pleasant pastoral country, about twenty miles from London. Lady Masham had become known to him as Damaris Cudworth, before his retreat to Holland, and it is plain that from the first she had excited his admiration and esteem. She was the daughter of Dr. Ralph Cudworth, Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, author of *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*, and of a posthumous work, still better known, *A Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality.* The close connexion which, in the latter years of his life, subsisted between Locke, the foremost name amongst the empirical philosophers of modern times, and the daughter of Cudworth, the most uncompromising of the *a priori* moralists and philosophers of the seventeenth century, may be regarded as one of the ironies of literary history. Damaris Cudworth, inheriting her father's tastes, took great interest in learning of all kinds, and specially in philosophy and theology. There was one point of community between her father and Locke besides their common pursuits, namely, the wide and philosophical view which they both took of theological controversies. Cudworth belonged to the small but learned and refined group of Cambridge Platonists or Latitudinarians, as they were called, which also numbered Henry More, John Smith, Culverwell, and Whichcote. Liberal and tolerant Churchmanship in those days, when it was so rare, was probably a much closer bond of union than it is now, and the associations which she had formed with her father's liberal, philosophical, and devout spirit must have helped to endear Locke to the daughter of Dr. Cudworth. During Locke's absence from England Damaris Cudworth had married, as his second wife, Sir Francis Masham, an amiable and hospitable

country gentleman, who seems to have occupied a prominent position in his county. With them lived Mrs. Cudworth, the widow of Dr. Cudworth, one little son, Francis, and a daughter by the former marriage, Esther, who was about fourteen when Locke commenced his visits to the family. From the first he seems to have had some idea of settling down at Oates, "making trial of the air of the place," than which, as Lady Masham tell us, "he thought none would be more suitable to him." After a very severe illness in the autumn of 1690, he spent several months with the Mashams, and appears then to have formed a more definite plan of making Oates his home. But, though his hospitable friends gave him every assurance of a constant welcome, he would only consent to regard it as a permanent residence on his own terms, which were that he should pay his share of the household expenses. With true kindness and courtesy, Sir Francis and Lady Masham, at last, in the spring of 1691, agreed to this arrangement, and "Mr. Locke then," says Lady Masham, "believed himself at home with us, and resolved, if it pleased God, here to end his days—as he did." Devoted and sympathetic friends, a pleasant residence, freedom from domestic or pecuniary cares, and the pure fresh air of the country seem to have afforded him all the enjoyment and leisure which we could have wished for him. After having had more than his share of the storms of life, he had at last found a quiet and pleasant haven wherein to enjoy the calm and sunshine of his declining years. Occasionally, and especially during the summer, he visited London, where, at first, he retained his old chambers at Westminister, moving afterwards to Lincoln's Inn Fields. But Oates was now his home, and it continued to be so to the end of his life.

Locke was always an attached friend, and we have seen already how many warm friendships he had formed in youth and middle age. At the present time, besides Limborch, Le Clerc, Lord Monmouth, and the Mashams, we may mention among his more intimate friends Lord Pembroke, the young Lord Ashley, Somers, Boyle, and Newton. Lord Pembroke (to whom the *Essay* is dedicated in what we should now regard as a tone of overwrought compliment) opened his town house for weekly meetings in which, instead of political and personal gossip, things of the mind were discussed. These conversations, "undisturbed by such as could not bear a part in the best entertainment of rational minds, free discourse concerning useful truths," were a source of great enjoyment to Locke during his London residence. It was through his introduction that Lord Pembroke, when sent on a special mission to the Hague, made the acquaintance, which afterwards ripened into friendship, of Limborch and Le Clerc.

The correspondence between Locke and Limborch, while Lord Pembroke was in Holland, reveals to us the curious fact that there was no organised carrying trade between England and Holland at that time. On returning, the Earl, or his Secretary, was commissioned to bring back a pound of tea and copies of the *Acta Eruditorum*. The tea must be had at any price. "I want the best tea,"

Locke writes to Limborch, "even if it costs forty florins a pound; only you must be quick, or we shall lose this opportunity, and I doubt whether we shall have another." The price that he was ready to pay for a pound of tea would be about 9*l.* at the present value of money. But tea at that time was regarded rather as a medicine than a beverage.

Young Lord Ashley, it will be recollected, had, like his father, been under the charge of Locke when a child. After being at school for some years at Winchester, and spending some time in travelling on the Continent, he was now again in London, living in his father's house at Chelsea. It is plain that the young philosopher saw a good deal of his "foster-father," as he called him, and they must often have discussed together the questions which were so interesting to them both. Ashley, moreover, who was already beginning to solve the problems of philosophy in his own way, addressed a number of letters to Locke, freely, but courteously and good-humouredly, criticising his master's views.

Sir John Somers, now Solicitor-General, and successively Attorney-General, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and Lord Chancellor, with the title of Lord Somers, had been known to Locke before his retirement to Holland. They were both of them attached to the Shaftesbury connexion, and hence, though Somers was nearly twenty years the junior, they had probably already seen a good deal of each other when William ascended the throne. On Locke's return to England, he found Somers a member of the Convention Parliament. The younger man, both when he was a rising barrister and a successful minister, seems frequently to have consulted the elder one, and Locke's principles of government, finance, and toleration must often have exerted a considerable influence both on his speeches and his measures. Nor had Locke any reasons to be ashamed of his teaching. "Lord Somers," says Horace Walpole, "was one of those divine men who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned, while all the rest is tyranny, corruption, and folly." It was, perhaps, through Somers that Locke made the acquaintance of another great and wise statesman, Charles Montague, subsequently Lord Halifax, with whom, at least during the latter years of his life, he had much political connexion, and by whom he was frequently called into counsel.

The acquaintance between Locke and Newton, of whom Newton was the junior by more than ten years, most probably began before Locke's departure to Holland. Both had then for some time been members of the Royal Society, and both were friends of Boyle. The first positive evidence, however, that we have of their relations is afforded by a paper, entitled "A Demonstration that the Planets, by their gravity towards the Sun, may move in Eclipses," and endorsed in Locke's handwriting, "Mr. Newton, March, 1689." In the summer or autumn of the same year, probably, was written the epistle to the reader prefixed to the *Essay*. In that occurs the following passage, expressing no doubt Locke's genuine opinion of the great writers whom he names:—"The Com

monwealth of learning is not at this time without master-builders, whose mighty designs in advancing the sciences will leave lasting monuments to the admiration of posterity; but every one must not hope to be a Boyle or a Sydenham, and in an age that produces such masters as the great Huygenius and the incomparable Mr. Newton, with some other of that strain, 'tis ambition enough to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge." Locke interested himself long and warmly in attempting to obtain for Newton some lucrative appointment in London. Newton's letters occasionally betray querulousness, but there can be no reason to suppose that Locke at all flagged in his efforts, and ultimately, with the assistance of Lord Monmouth, Lord Halifax, and others, they proved successful. Newton was, in course of time, appointed Warden, and then Master of the Mint. In January, 1690–91, the philosopher and the mathematician met at Oates. Their conversation there probably turned chiefly on theological topics, as was the case with most of their correspondence afterwards. Newton was greatly interested not only in theological speculation, but in the interpretation of prophecy and Biblical criticism, on both of which subjects works by him are extant. In 1690 he wrote a manuscript letter to Locke, entitled "An Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture in a Letter to a Friend," the texts criticised being 1 John v. 7, and 1 Timothy iii. 16. The corruption of the former of these texts is now almost universally, and that of the latter very generally, acknowledged; but so jealous of orthodoxy, in respect of anything which seemed to affect the doctrine of the Trinity, was public opinion at that time, that Newton did not dare to publish the pamphlet. Locke, who was meditating a visit to Holland, was, by Newton's wish, to have taken it over with him, and to have had it translated into French, and published anonymously. But the intended visit fell through, and Locke sent the manuscript over to Le Clerc. So timid, however, was Newton, that he now tried to recall it. "Let me entreat you," he writes to Locke, "to stop the translation and impression of the papers as soon as you can, for I desire to suppress them." Le Clerc thought more nobly and more justly that "one ought to risk a little in order to be of service to those honest folk who err only through ignorance, and who, if they get a chance, would gladly be disabused of their false notions." The letter was not published till after its author's death, and at first it appeared only in an imperfect form. In Bishop Horsley's edition of Newton it is printed complete. Newton's unpublished writings leave no doubt that he did not accept the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and it may have been his consciousness of this fact which made him so afraid of being known to be the author of what was merely a critical exercitation. But we must recollect that at this time Biblical criticism was unfamiliar to the majority of divines, and that to question the authenticity of a text was generally regarded as identical with doubting the doctrine which it was supposed to illustrate. One of the other sub-

jects on which Locke and Newton corresponded was a parcel of red earth which had been left by Boyle, who died on Dec. 30, 1691, to Locke and his other literary executors, with directions for turning it into gold. Locke seems to have had some faith in the alchemistic process, but it is plain that Newton had none. He was satisfied that "mercury, by this recipe, might be brought to change its colors and properties, but not that gold might be multiplied thereby." Some workmen of whom he had heard as practising the recipe had been forced to other means of living, a proof that the multiplication of gold did not succeed as a profession. Occasionally, owing to Newton's nervous and irritable temper, which at one time threatened to settle down into a fixed melancholy, there seems to have been some misunderstanding of Locke on his part, but it is satisfactory to know that the two greatest literary men of their age in England, if not in Europe, lived, almost without interruption, in friendly and even intimate relations with each other.

The close intercourse between Boyle and Locke, which dated from their Oxford days, seems to have been kept up till the time of Boyle's death. Locke made a special journey to London to visit him on his death-bed, and was, as we have seen, left one of his literary executors. The editing of Boyle's *General History of the Air* had already been committed to Locke, and seems to have occupied much of his time during the year 1691.

Of Locke's less-known friends, Dr. David Thomas must have died between 1687, when there is a letter from him to Locke, and 1700, when Locke speaks of having outlived him. Sir James Tyrrell, another old college friend, usually spoken of in Locke's correspondence as Musidore, was in communication with him as late as April, 1704, the year of his death. He had, as already stated, been present at the "meeting of five or six friends" in Locke's chamber. which first suggested the composition of the *Essay*.

Edward Clarke, of Chipley, near Taunton, was another friend of old standing. He was elected member for Taunton in King William's second parliament, and from that time forward resided much in London. This circumstance probably deepened the intimacy between the two friends; at all events, during the remainder of Locke's life they are constantly associated. Locke advised Clarke as to the education of his children, one of whom, Betty, a little girl now about ten years old, seems to have been regarded by him with peculiar affection; in his letters he constantly speaks of her as "Mrs. Locke" and his "wife." The playful banter with which Locke treated his child friends affords unmistakable evidence of the kindness and simplicity of his heart.

William Molyneux, who for many years represented the University of Dublin in the Irish Parliament, referred to in the second edition of the *Essay* as "that very ingenious and studious promoter of real knowledge, the worthy and learned Mr. Molyneux," "this thinking gentleman whom, though I have never had the happiness to see, I am proud to call my friend," first became acquainted with Locke in 1692. In his *Dioptrica Nova*, published in that year, he

had paid Locke a graceful, if not an exaggerated, compliment. "To none do we owe, for a greater advancement in this part of philosophy," he said, speaking of logic, "than to the incomparable Mr. Locke, who hath rectified more received mistakes, and delivered more profound truths, established on experience and observation, for the direction of man's mind in the prosecution of knowledge, which I think may be properly termed logic, than are to be met with in all the volumes of the ancients. He has clearly overthrown all those metaphysical whimsies which infected men's brains with a spice of madness, whereby they feigned a knowledge where they had none, by making a noise with sounds without clear and distinct significations." Locke was pleased with the compliment, and a letter acknowledging the receipt of Molyneux's book was the beginning of a long correspondence between them, which ended only with the early death of Molyneux, at the age of forty-two, in 1698. For nearly six years the friends, though in constant correspondence, had never seen each other, Molyneux residing in Dublin, and suffering, like Locke, from feeble health, which prevented him from crossing the Channel. But the feeling of affection seems soon to have become as intense, notwithstanding Aristotle's dictum that personal intercourse is essential to the continuance of friendship, as if they had lived together all their lives. In his second letter to Molyneux, dated Sept. 20, 1692, Locke says: "You must expect to have me live with you hereafter. For meeting with but few men in the world whose acquaintance I find much reason to covet, I make more than ordinary haste into the familiarity of a rational inquirer after and lover of truth, whenever I can light on any such. There are beauties of the mind as well as of the body, that take and prevail at first sight; and, wherever I have met with this, I have readily surrendered myself, and have never yet been deceived in my expectation." Molyneux had thought of coming over to England on a visit to Locke in the summer of 1694. Locke, in a letter written in the following spring, after depreciating the risks to which his journey might expose him, adds:—"And yet, if I may confess my secret thoughts, there is not anything which I would not give that some other unavoidable occasion would draw you into England. A rational, free-minded man, tied to nothing but truth, is so rare a thing that I almost worship such a friend; but, when friendship is joined to it, and these are brought into a free conversation, where they meet and can be together, what is there can have equal charms? I cannot but exceedingly wish for that happy day when I may see a man I have so often longed to have in my embraces. . . . You cannot think how often I regret the distance that is between us; I envy Dublin for what I every day want in London." In a subsequent letter, written in 1695, he writes:—"I cannot complain that I have not my share of friends of all ranks, and such whose interest, assistance, affection, and opinions too, in fit cases, I can rely on. But methinks, for all this, there is one place vacant that I know nobody would so well fill as yourself; I want one near me to talk freely with "de quolibet

ente," to propose to the extravagancies that rise in my mind; one with whom I would debate several doubts and questions to see what was in them." Thomas Molyneux, the brother of William, a physician practising in Dublin, had met Locke during his stay in Holland. They shared a common admiration for Sydenham, and the correspondence with William Molyneux revived their friendship, though it never attained to nearly the same proportions as that between Locke and the other brother. A passage on what may be called the Logic of Medicine, in one of Locke's letters to Thomas Molyneux, is worth quoting:—"What we know of the works of nature, especially in the constitution of health and the operations of our own bodies, is only by the sensible effects, but not by any certainty we can have of the tools she uses or the ways she walks by. So that there is nothing left for a physician to do but to observe well, and so, by analogy, argue to like cases, and thence make to himself rules of practice."

Nov. 7, 1691, is the date of the dedication of the Tract entitled "Some considerations on the Lowering of Interest and Raising the Value of Money in a letter sent to a Member of Parliament, 1691." This letter was published anonymously in the following year. The member of Parliament was undoubtedly Sir John Somers, who had "put" the author "upon looking out his old papers concerning the reducing of interest to 4 per cent., which had so long," nearly twenty years, "lain by, forgotten." The time to which Locke refers must be the year 1672, when the Exchequer was closed, that is to say, all payments to the public creditors suspended for a year, and the interest on the Bankers' advances reduced to six per cent. This nefarious act of spoliation, which caused wide-spread ruin and distress, was devised while Shaftesbury was Chancellor of the Exchequer, but the main blame in the transaction probably attaches to Clifford. "The notions concerning coinage," which are embodied in the second division of the pamphlet, had been put into writing and apparently shown to Somers about twelve months before the date of the letter. On the occasion and contents of this pamphlet, as well as of Locke's other tracts on Finance, I shall have an opportunity of speaking in subsequent chapters.

Many of my readers will sympathize with Locke in his complaints of the waste of his time during this autumn. Writing to Limborch, on Nov. 14, he says, "I know not how it is, but the pressure of other people's business has left me no time or leisure for my own affairs. Do not suppose that I mean public business. I have neither health, nor strength, nor knowledge enough to attend to that. And when I ask myself what has so hampered and occupied me during the last three months, it seems as if a sort of spell had been thrown on me, so that I have got entangled first in one business and then in another, without being able to avoid it, or, in fact, to foresee what was coming." Locke was pre-eminently a good-natured man, and, like many other men before and since, he had to pay the penalty of good-nature by doing a vast amount of

other people's business, often probably with scant acknowledgment. One of the occupations in which he was engaged may have been doctoring the household at Oates and advising medically for his friends at a distance; but in business of this kind, though he may have grudged the time it consumed, he seems always to have taken special delight.

In the summer of 1692 he spent a considerable time in London. His main business there seems to have been to see the *Third Letter on Toleration* through the press. But he was now, as ever, to do work for his friends. Thus he obtained for Limborch the permission to dedicate the book which he had so long been preparing, the *Historia Inquisitionis*, to Tillotson, then Archbishop of Canterbury. Limborch evidently set great store on this privilege. Of Tillotson, Locke seems to have entertained a very high opinion; which, indeed, was thoroughly well deserved. "In proportion to his renown and worth is his modesty." Tillotson was not one of those liberal Churchmen whom promotion makes timid, or cold to their former friends. He was maligned by an unforgiving and unscrupulous faction, more, perhaps, than any other man of that age, but he always retained the courage of his opinions.

Locke's health seems to have suffered much during the winter of 1692–93. But he still occupied himself with literary work. While in Holland, he had corresponded frequently with Clarke on the education of his children. Yielding to the solicitation of many of his friends, especially William Molyneux, he now reduced the letters to the form of a treatise, which was published in July, 1693, under the title *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. The dedication to Clarke bears date in the previous March, and is signed by Locke, though his name does not appear on the title-page. The most serious work, however, in which he was now engaged, was the preparation of a second edition of the *Essay*. The first edition seems to have been exhausted in the autumn of 1692. On the alterations and additions introduced into the second edition, there is an interesting correspondence with Molyneux, ranging from Sept. 20, 1692, to May 26, 1694, when the new edition, notwithstanding the "slowness of the press," was printed and bound, and ready to be sent" to Locke's Dublin correspondent. Besides suggestions in detail, such as those touching the questions of liberty and personal identity, Molyneux urged Locke to undertake a separate work on Ethics, a suggestion which for a time he entertained favourably, but which, owing partly, perhaps, to his idea that the principles and rules of morality ought to be presented in a demonstrative form, was never carried out. Though he does not seem to have doubted that "morality might be demonstrably made out," yet whether he was able so to make it out was another question. "Every one could not have demonstrated what Mr. Newton's book hath shown to be demonstrable." He was, however, ready to employ the first leisure he could find that way. But the treatise never proceeded beyond a few rough notes. Another reason assigned, at a later period, for not more seriously setting about this task was that "the

Gospel contains so perfect a body of ethics, that reason may be excused for that inquiry, since she may find man's duty clearer and easier in revelation than in herself." This argument shows at once the sincerity of Locke's religious convictions, and the inadequate conception he had formed to himself of the grounds and nature of Moral Philosophy. Another suggestion made by Molyneux was that, besides a second edition of the *Essay*, Locke should bring out, in accordance with the main lines of his philosophy, another work forming a complete compendium of logic and metaphysics for the use of University Students. No one can regret that the author of the *Essay* did not adopt this advice. Apropos of this suggestion, Molyneux tells Locke that Dr. Ashe, then Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, "was so wonderfully pleased and satisfied with the work, that he has ordered it to be read by the bachelors in the college, and strictly examines them in their progress therein." From that time onwards the *Essay* seems to have held its ground as a class-book at Dublin. The reception which it met with at first from the authorities of Locke's own University, as we shall see presently, was widely different. In May, 1694, the second edition was on sale, and was quickly exhausted. The third edition, which is simply a reprint of the second, appeared in the following year. One more edition, the fourth, dated 1700, but issued in the autumn of 1699, appeared during Locke's lifetime. In it there are important alterations and additions, including two new chapters—that on Enthusiasm, and the very important one at the end of the second book, on the Association of Ideas. A Latin translation of the *Essay* by Richard Burridge, an Irish Clergyman, was published at London, in 1701; and a French translation by Pierre Coste, who was a friend of Le Clerc, and had been acting for some time as tutor to young Frank Masham at Amsterdam, in 1700. John Wynne, Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, and subsequently Bishop of St. Asaph, published an abridgment for the use of University Students, in 1696. Wynne had a large number of pupils, and the compendium of Locke's philosophy appears to have obtained rapid circulation among the younger students in Oxford, only, however, as we shall soon see, to encounter the opposition of the authorities.

It is notable that all the important alterations and additions made in the second edition of the *Essay* were printed on separate slips, and issued, without charge, to those who possessed the first. Sir James Tyrrell's copy of the first edition, with these slips pasted in, is in the British Museum; and that of William Molyneux in the Bodleian. In sending to Molyneux the second edition, Locke had also forwarded the slips to be pasted in the first, which would "help to make the book useful to any young man;" but whether Molyneux gave the copy now in the Bodleian to "any young man," and, if so, who the fortunate young man was, we do not learn.

The first writer who had taken up his pen against Locke was John Norris, the amiable and celebrated Vicar of Bemerton, a religious and philosophical mystic, whose works are even still in

repute. Norris was a disciple of Malebranche, and his attack seems to have had the effect of leading Locke to make a careful study of the theories of the French philosopher. The result was two tractates—one entitled *Remarks upon some of Mr. Norris's Books;* the other, *An Examination of Père Malebranche's Opinion of seeing all things in God.* The latter is much the more considerable production of the two, and is mainly remarkable as showing that Locke saw clearly that the conclusions, subsequently drawn by Berkeley, must follow from Malebranche's premises. Neither of these tracts was published till after Locke's death. The reasons assigned by him for not publishing his criticism of Malebranche are characteristic: "I love not controversies, and have a personal kindness for the author."

Locke's literary activity during the years 1689–95 appears excessive; but we must recollect that he had already accumulated a vast amount of material, and that, during the latter part of that time at least, he must have enjoyed considerable leisure in his country retirement. In the early months of 1695, he was mainly occupied with a new subject—the *Essay on the Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures.* Though this work was designed to establish the supernatural character of the Christian revelation, and its importance to mankind, it by no means satisfied the canons of a strict orthodoxy. Some of the more mysterious and less intelligible doctrines of the Christian Church, if not denied, were at least represented as unessential to saving faith. Hence it at once provoked a bitter controversy. "The buz, the flutter, and noise which was made, and the reports which were raised," says its author, "would have persuaded the world that it subverted all morality, and was designed against the Christian religion. I must confess, discussions of this kind, which I met with, spread up and down, at first amazed me; knowing the sincerity of those thoughts which persuaded me to publish it, not without some hope of doing some service to decaying piety and mistaken and slandered Christianity." The first assailant was John Edwards, a former Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, who in a violent pamphlet, entitled *Thoughts concerning the Causes and Occasions of Atheism*, included the *Reasonableness of Christianity* in his attack, and insinuated that Locke was its author by affecting to disbelieve it. The book was described as "all over Socinianized," and a Socinian, if not an atheist, is, according to Edwards, "one that favours the cause of atheism." That there was much similarity between the apparent opinions of Locke and the doctrines of Faustus Socinus himself, though not of Socinus's more extreme followers, who were also popularly called Socinians, admits of no doubt. But the charge of favouring atheism can only have been brought against a man who regarded the existence of God as "the most obvious truth that reason discovers," and who appears never to have questioned the reality of supernatural intervention, from time to time, in the world's history, because it happened to be the roughest stone that could be found in the contro-

versial wallet. Locke replied to Edwards with pardonable asperity, in a tract entitled *A Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity*. Edwards, of course, soon replied to the reply, and attacked Locke more violently than ever in his *Socinianism Unmasked*. No rejoinder followed, but the adversary was not to be let off on such easy terms. Another shot was fired, and *The Socinian Creed*, as venomous and more successful than the *Socinianism Unmasked*, provoked *A Second Vindication*. This lengthy pamphlet, far more elaborate than the first, must have occupied much of Locke's time. It did not appear till the spring of 1697. Edwards returned to the charge; but, fortunately, Locke had the wisdom and courage to refrain from carrying on the fight. Bitter as the feeling against Locke must have been in many clerical circles at this time, there were not wanting, even amongst the clergy, those who sympathised with his views. Mr. Bolde, a Dorsetshire clergyman, came forward to defend him against Edwards. And Molyneux, writing on the 26th of September, 1696, says, "As to the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, I do not find but it is very well approved of here amongst candid, unprejudiced men, that dare speak their thoughts. I'll tell you what a very learned and ingenious prelate said to me on that occasion. I asked him whether he had read that book, and how he liked it. He told me very well; and that, if my friend Mr. Locke writ it, it was the best book he ever laboured at; 'but,' says he, 'if I should be known to think so, I should have my lawns torn from my shoulders.' But he knew my opinion aforehand, and was, therefore, the freer to commit his secret thoughts in that matter to me." We may not be disposed to think highly of the "very learned and ingenious prelate;" but the story shows, as indeed we know from other sources, to what a volume of opinion, both lay and clerical, on the expediency of presenting Christianity in a more "reasonable" and less mysterious and dogmatic form, Locke's treatise had given expression. Men were anxious to retain their beliefs in the supernatural order of events, but they were equally anxious to harmonise them with what they regarded as the necessities of reason. The current of "Rationalism" had set in.

It is satisfactory to know that, amidst all these controversial worries, which must have been most distasteful to a man of his habits and temper, Locke enjoyed the solace of pleasant companionship and domestic serenity. He was thoroughly at home at Oates, and Lord Monmouth and his other friends in and near town seem always to have been ready to accord him a hearty welcome, whenever he cared to pay them a visit. His little "wife," Betty Clarke, and her brother used occasionally to come on visits to him at the Mashams, and he seems to have taken great delight in the society of Esther Masham, who was now rapidly growing up to womanhood. "In raillery," wrote this lady many years afterwards, "he used to call me his Laudabridis, and I called him my John." The winters of 1694–95 and 1695–96 were unusually long and severe, and in both of them Locke appears to have been under apprehensions that his chronic illness might terminate in death.

It may here be noticed that in the summer of 1694 Locke became one of the original proprietors of the Bank of England, which, having been projected by a merchant named William Paterson, had been established by Act of Parliament in April of that year, and invested with certain trading privileges, on condition that it should lend its capital to the Government at eight per cent. interest. The plan had encountered great opposition, especially among the landed gentry, and had only been carried through the strenuous exertions of Montague and the Whig party. Locke subscribed 500*l.*, a considerable sum in those days.

CHAPTER VI.

POLITICAL AFFAIRS.—PUBLIC OCCUPATIONS.—RELATIONS WITH THE KING.

NOTWITHSTANDING his retirement to Oates, and his incessant literary activity, Locke never lost his interest in politics, and, as the friend and admirer of men like Monmouth, Somers, and Clarke, he must always have exercised a considerable influence on the policy of the Whig party. In the spring of 1695 he seems to have taken a primary share in determining a measure which for a time divided the Houses of Lords and Commons, and which must have enlisted his warmest sympathies. This was the repeal of the Licensing Act. The English Press had never been wholly free, and the Act of Charles II., which was still in force, was peculiarly stringent. Occasion had been taken by the Commons, when it was proposed, in the session of 1694–95, to renew certain temporary statutes, to strike out this particular statute from the list. The Lords dissented, and re-inserted it. The Commons refused to accept the amendment. A conference of both Houses took place, Clarke of Chipley being the leading manager on the part of the Commons, and the result was that the Lords waived their objections. The paper of reasons tendered by the Commons' managers on this occasion is said, by a writer in the *Craftsman* for Nov. 20, 1731, to have been drawn up by Locke. As Clarke was one of his most intimate friends, and as the Reasons correspond pretty closely with a paper of criticisms on the Act written by Locke, this statement is probably true, so far at least as concerns their substance. The arguments employed are mainly practical, consisting of objections in detail, and pointing out inconveniences, financial and otherwise, which resulted from the operation of the Act. But these arguments, "suited to the capacity of the parliamentary majority," did, as Macaulay has remarked, what Milton's *Areopagitica* had failed to do, and a vote, "of which the history can be but imperfectly traced in the Journals of the House, has done more for liberty and for civilisation than the Great Charter or the Bill of Rights." Locke's paper of Criticisms, which is published *in extenso* in *Lord King's Life*, asks very pertinently, "why a man should not have liberty to print whatever he would speak, and be answerable for the one, just as he is for the other, if he transgresses the law in either." He then offers a suggestion, to take the place of

the licensing provisions:—"Let the printer or bookseller be answerable for whatever is against law in the book, as if he were the author, unless he can produce the person he had it from, which is all the restraint ought to be upon printing." It appears from this paper that the monopoly of the Stationers' Company had become so oppressive that books printed in London could be bought cheaper at Amsterdam than in St. Paul's Church Yard. Except for the few monopolists, the book-trade had been ruined in England. But then, he reflects, "our ecclesiastical laws seldom favour trade, and he that reads this Act with attention will find it upse" (that is, highly) "ecclesiastical."

This question had hardly been settled before Locke had another opportunity of influencing legislation on a subject which absorbed much of his interest, and on which he had already employed his pen. Probably at no time in the history of our country has the condition of the coinage become so burning a question, or caused such wide-spread distress, as in the years immediately succeeding the Revolution. To understand the monetary difficulties occasioned by clipping the coin, it must be remembered that, at the time of which I am speaking, two kinds of silver money (if we neglect the imperfectly milled money which was executed between 1561 and 1663) were in circulation, hammered money with unmarked rims, and what was called milled money, from being made in a coining-mill, with a legend on the rim of the larger and graining on the rim of the smaller pieces. The latter kind of coins, too, had the additional advantage of being almost perfectly circular, while the shape of the former was almost always more or less irregular. The hammered money, it is plain, could be easily clipped or pared, whereas the milling was an absolute protection against this mode of fraud. Though milling, in much its present form, had been introduced into our mint in the year 1663, and then became the exclusive mode of coining, the old hammered money still continued to be legal tender; and, as the milled money was always worth its weight in silver, and the hammered money was generally current at something much above its intrinsic worth, the milled money was naturally melted down or exported abroad, leaving the hammered money in almost exclusive possession of the field. The milled money disappeared almost as fast as it was coined, and the hammered money was clipped and pared more and more, till it was often not worth half or even a third of the sum for which it passed. At Oxford, indeed, a hundred pounds' worth of the current silver money, which ought to have weighed four hundred ounces, was found to weigh only a hundred and sixteen. Every month the state of things was becoming worse and worse. The cost of commodities was constantly rising, and every payment of any amount involved endless altercations. In a bargain not only had the price of the article to be settled, but also the value of the money in which it was to be paid. A guinea, which at one place counted for only twenty-two shillings, would at another fetch thirty, and might have brought far more, had not the Government

fixed the sum as the maximum at which it would be taken in the payment of taxes. Thus, all commercial transactions had become disarranged; no one knew what he was really worth, or what any commodity might cost him a few months hence. Macaulay, who has given a most graphic description of the financial condition of the country at this time, hardly exaggerates when he says, "It may de doubted whether all the misery which had been inflicted on the English nation in a quarter of a century by bad kings, bad ministers, bad parliaments, and bad judges, was equal to the misery caused in a single year by bad crowns and bad shillings." Almost from the moment of his return to England, Locke had felt the gravest anxiety on this subject. When at my lodgings in London," says Lady Masham, speaking of the time immediately succeeding the Revolution, "the company there, finding him often afflicted about a matter which nobody else took any notice of, have railied him upon this uneasiness as being a visionary trouble, he has more than once replied, 'We might laugh at it, but it would not be long before we should want money to send our servants to market with for bread and meat,' which was so true, five or six years after, that there was not a family in England who did not find this a difficulty." The letter on "Some Considerations of the Consequences of Lowering of Interest and Raising the Value of Money," the latter part of which dealt with this question, is dated as early as Nov. 7, 1691, and had been, in the main, as he tells us, put into writing about twelve months before. Here he not only points out the intolerable character of the grievances under which the nation was labouring, but also protests most emphatically against one of the proposed methods of remedying them, namely, "raising the value of money," as it was called; that is, depreciating the intrinsic value of the money coined, or raising the denomination, so, for instance, as to put into a crown-piece or a shilling, when coined, less than the customary amount of silver. To the consideration of this scheme, which at one time found much favor, we shall soon see that he had occasion to recur. Universal as were the complaints about the existing state of things, no active measures, if we except wholesale and frequent hangings for "clipping the coin," and increased measures of vigilance for the purpose of detecting the delinquents, were taken for stopping the evil, until the year 1695. Under the malign ascendancy of Danby, the Government had other views and objects than to ameliorate the condition of the people. But, in the years 1694 and 1695, other and more enlightened statesmen were gradually winning their way into the royal councils, or beginning to occupy a more important position in them. For at this period, we must recollect, the high officers of state were not all, as now, necessarily of one uniform political pattern. In April, 1694, immediately after the establishment of the Bank of England, Charles Montague, afterwards Lord Halifax, one of the greatest of English financiers, had been made Chnncellor of the Exchequer. And, on occasion of the king's departure for the Continent in May, 1695, two of Locke's most intimate friends—Lord Keeper Somers and

the Earl of Pembroke—were nominated among the seven Lords Justices, who were to govern the kingdom during William's absence. To discerning and judicious statesmen like Somers and Montague it must have been apparent that the penal laws for protecting the coinage were altogether inadequate to the purpose. The gains to be made were so large and so easily obtained, that men were ready to run the risk of the punishment. And, moreover, even if the crime was detected, the punishment was by no means certain or unattended with sympathy. Great as were the suffering and inconveniences inflicted on the people by these practices, the punishment of death appeared to many to be in excess of the offence. Juries were often unwilling to convict, and the disgrace incurred by the criminal was very different from that which attended the murderer or the ordinary thief. That wise financial legislation, and not the more stringent execution of the penal laws, was the true and only effectual mode of eradicating the disease, was at length recognized by the Government, and the new Lords Justices soon set about to devise the remedy. To Locke, who was well known to have been the author of the pamphlet which appeared on the subject in 1692, they naturally turned for advice. In the early part of October, while the king was on his way back from his successful campaign in the Netherlands, he was summoned up from Oates to confer with them. Writing to Molyneux the next month, and informing him of the fact, he adds, with characteristic modesty: "This is too publicly known here to make the mentioning of it to you appear vanity in me." Notwithstanding the subordinate part which Locke here seems to assign to himself, there can be no doubt that his share in the measures of the Government, as ultimately matured, was a principal, if not the principal, one. That legislative measures would now be taken, there was no longer any question. But the danger of which Locke was chiefly afraid was raising the denomination of the coin, or, in other words, the legalized depreciation of the currency, a scheme against which he had formerly protested, and which was now officially recommended to the Government by one of their own subordinates, William Lowndes. Orders had been given to Lowndes, who, after many years of good service in a subordinate capacity, had recently been appointed Secretary to the Treasury, to collect statistics relating to the monetary condition of the country, and to report on the most practicable methods of re-coining the current silver money. In executing the former part of his task, he left no doubt as to the necessity of speedily applying some remedy. The silver coins brought into the Exchequer during three months of 1695 ought to have weighed 221,418 ounces. Their actual weight was 113,771 ounces, or barely over one-half. In consequence of the vitiating, diminishing, and counterfeiting of the current moneys, he says, "It is come to pass that great contentions do daily arise amongst the king's subjects in fairs, markets, shops, and other places throughout the kingdom, about the passing and refusing of the same, to the great disturbance of the public peace. Many bar-

gains, doings, and dealings are totally prevented and laid aside, which iessens trade in general." The necessity of setting the price of commodites according to the value of the money to be received, is, he considers, "one great cause of raising the price, not only of merchandise, but even of edibles and other necessaries for the sustenance of the common people, to their great grievance." So far, his political economy was perfectly sound; but when he comes to discuss the question of re-coinage, he advocates, without any misgiving, a scheme for the depreciation of the currency to the extent of one-fifth. A crown-piece was henceforth to count as 6*s.* 3*d.*, and the nominal value of half-crowns, shillings, and sixpences was to be raised proportionately. Locke, with his clearer mind, saw, of course, that this would only be for the state to do systematically and by law the very same thing for which the clippers were being hanged. It would be to legalize the disarrangement of all monetary transactions, and to deprive every creditor of one-fifth of his debts. Montague and Somers were as clear on this point as he was, and Somers at once urged him to reply. Locke had returned to Oates, in consequence of the sudden death of Mrs. Cudworth, on the 16th of November, and at once set about his answer.

This tract, which formed a pamphlet of more than a hundred pages, was submitted to the Lords Justices, printed, and published before the end of December. It was entitled *Further Considerations concerning Raising the Value of Money*, and simplified and enforced the arguments contained in a previous pamphlet which Locke had also drawn up for the use of the Lords Justices earlier in the year, under the title, *Some Observations on a Printed Paper entitled, For Encouraging the Coining Silver money in England, and after for keeping it here.* Meanwhile, Montague had, under the sanction of a committee of the whole House, introduced his resolutions into the House of Commons, and there can be little doubt that, in drawing up these, he and the Lords Justices had been assisted by Locke. Any way, the resolutions embodied in the main the opinions which Locke had been so instrumental in impressing on those in authority. The old standard value of the silver pieces was to be retained both as to weight and fineness, the point for which he had fought so persistently. The clipped pieces were, after a certain day, only to be received in payment of taxes, or in loans to the Exchequer; after a further day, they were to cease to be legal tender altogether. All the hammered money, as it came into the mint in payment of loans or taxes, was to be re-coined as milled money, and the loss to be borne by the Exchequer. When the resolution that the old standard was to be retained was put to the House, it was challenged, and an amendment moved by those who were of Lowndes' opinion that the word "both" be omitted. On a division, there were 225 for retaining the word, and 114 against. The House thus, by a large majority, affirmed what all economists would now regard as an elementary principle of finance. A Bill embodying the resolution was soon passed, but, in conse-

quence of difficulties with the Lords, had to be dropped. A fresh Bill was introduced on the 13th of January, substantially embodying the same provisions as the old Bill, and was hurried through its various stages so fast that it received the Royal Assent on the 21st of January, 1695–96. Up to the 4th of May, 1696, the clipped money was to be received in payment of taxes, and up to the 24th of June, for loans or other payments into the Exchequer. But after the 10th of February ensuing, it was to cease to be legal tender in ordinary payments. Thus, in spite of much temporary inconvenience caused by the scarcity of money during the time of transition, the silver coinage of the country was, once for all, put upon a sound basis. Late as Locke's pamphlet appeared, it probably helped to facilitate the passage of the Bill through the two Houses, as the reiterated statement of his opinions had undoubtedly contributed in very large measure to shape and confirm the action of the government. It may be mentioned that the loss to the Exchequer, estimated as 1.200,000*l.*, was made up by the imposition of a house tax and window tax, the former of which still continues, while the latter existed within the memory of many men now only of middle age.

Great as is the debt which philosophy owes to Locke's *Essay*, constitutional theory to his treatises on government, the freedom of religious speculation to his Letters on Toleration, and the ways of "sweet reasonableness" to all these, and indeed to all his works, it would form a nice subject of discussion whether mankind at large has not been more benefited by the share which he took in practical reforms than by his literary productions. It would undoubtedly be too much to affirm that, without his initiative or assistance, the state of the coinage would never have been reformed, the monopoly of the Stationers' Company abolished, or the shackles of the Licensing Act struck off. But had it not been for his clearness of vision, and the persistence of his philanthropic effort, these measures might have been indefinitely retarded or clogged with provisos and compromises which might have robbed them of more than half their effects. A generation ago it was the fashion in many circles to speak contemptuously of the writers and statesmen of William's reign, and even now but scant and grudging justice is often done to them. The admirers of mystical philosophy and romantic politics may, however, fairly be challenged to show that their heroes, whether in letters or action, have borne equal fruit with the vigorous understanding and plain, direct, practical common-sense of men like Halifax, Somers, and Locke.

It has already been stated that soon after his return to England Locke was appointed a Commissioner of Appeals, a post which, though not entirely without duties, seems to have taken up but little of his time. One of his letters to Clarke shows the difficulty of forming a quorum, and perhaps illustrates the fact that when the duties of an office are slight, they are generally neglected altogether. But towards the end of the year 1695 the government, now virtually under the leadership of Somers, determined to

revive the council of trade and plantations of which, it will be recollected, Locke had been Secretary when Shaftesbury's counsels were in the ascendant at the court of Charles II., as far back as the year 1673. At first there were some difficulties with the king, but ultimately, on the 15th of May, 1696, he was induced to issue the patent appointing and defining the duties of a commission. Besides the great officers of state, there were to be certain paid commissioners, with a salary of 1000*l.* a year, of whom Locke was one. His name was inserted in the first draft of the commission without his express consent, and he appears, as we can well understand, to have accepted the office only with extreme reluctance. Writing to Molyneux, who had congratulated him on the appointment, he says with evident sincerity:

"Your congratulation I take as you meant, kindly and seriously, and, it may be, it is what another would rejoice in; but 'tis a preferment I shall get nothing by, and I know not whether my country will, though that I shall aim at with all my endeavours. Riches may be instrumental to so many good purposes, that it is, I think, vanity rather than religion or philosophy to pretend to contemn them. But yet they may be purchased too dear. My age and health demand a retreat from bustle and business, and the pursuit of some inquiries I have in my thoughts makes it more desirable than any of those rewards which public employments tempt people with. I think the little I have enough, and do not desire to live higher or die richer than I am. And therefore you have reason rather to pity the folly, than congratulate the fortune, that engages me in the whirlpool."

The duties of the commission could hardly have been more widely defined than they were. It was to be at once a Board of Trade, a Poor-Law Board, and a Colonial Office. The commissoners were to inquire into the general condition of trade in the country, both internal and external, and "to consider by what means the several useful and profitable manufactures already settled in the kingdom may be further improved; and how, and in what manner, new and profitable manufactures may be introduced." They were also "to consider of some proper methods for setting on work and employing the poor of the kingdom, and making them useful to the public, and thereby easing our subjects of that burthen." Finally, they were to inform themselves of the present condition of the plantations, as the colonies were then called, not only in relation to commerce, but also to the administration of government and justice, as well as to suggest means of rendering them more useful to the mother country, especially in the supply of naval stores. Here, surely, was work enough for men far younger and more vigorous than Locke; but, having undertaken the duties of the office, he appears in no way to have spared himself. In the summer and autumn months he resided in London, and attended the meetings of the board personally, often day after day, and in the evening as well as the day-time. In the winter and spring his health compelled him to reside at Oates, but he was

constantly sending up long minutes for the use of his colleagues. Mr. Fox, Bourne, who has been carefully through the proceedings of the commission, informs us that Locke was altogether its presiding genius. He was a member of this board a little over four years, having been compelled by increasing ill-health, or, as the minutes of the council put it, "finding his health more and more impaired by the air of this city," to resign on the 28th of June, 1700. The king, we are told by Lady Masham, was most unwilling to receive his resignation, "telling him that, were his attendance ever so small, he was sensible his countenance in the commission would be useful to him, and that he did not desire he should be one day in town on that account to the prejudice of his health." Locke, however, was too conscientious to retain a place with large emoluments, of which he felt that he could no longer perform the duties to his own satisfaction. It is interesting to find that his successor was Matthew Prior, the poet.

When we have seen the wide powers of the commission, we hardly need feel surprise that its business was multifarious. It at once set to work to collect evidence of the state of trade in the colonies, of our commercial relations with foreign ports, of the condition of the linen and paper manufactures at home, of the number of paupers in the kingdom, and the mode of their relief, as well as to devise means for increasing the woollen trade and preventing the exportation of wool. Locke was specially commissioned "to draw up a scheme of some method of determining differences between merchants by referees that might be decisive without appeal." In the winter of 1696–97, finding that his work followed him to Oates, and being then apparently in a feebler state of health than usual, he made an ineffectual attempt to escape from his new employment, but Somers refused to hand in his resignation to the king. From a Letter to Molyneux we find that it was not simply his ill-health, but the "corruption of the age," which made him averse to continuing in office. And we can well understand how troublesome, and apparently hopeless, it must have been to deal with the various threatened interests of that time, when monopolies, patents, and pensions were regarded by the governing classes almost as a matter of course.

In the summer of 1697 the principal subject which engaged the attention of the commission was the best means of discouraging the Irish woollen manufacture, and of, at the same time, encouraging the Irish linen manufacture. Each commissioner was invited to bring up a separate report. Three did so. Locke's was the one selected, and, with slight alterations, was signed by the other commissioners on the 31st of August, and forwarded almost immediately afterwards to the Lords Justices. This interesting state-document proceeds entirely upon the notions of protection to native industries which were then almost universally current among statesmen and merchants. The problems were to secure to England the monopoly of what was then regarded as its peculiar and appropriate manufacture, the woollen trade, and to assign to Ire-

land, in return for the restrictions imposed upon her, some compensating branch of industry. According to the ideas then commonly prevalent, the scheme was perfectly equitable to both countries. But, naturally, the interests of England are put in the foreground. The interests of the Irish people, however, were not to be neglected, and what Locke doubtless conceived as full compensation was to be given them for the loss of their woollen trade. "And since it generally proves ineffectual, and we conceive it hard to endeavour to drive men from the trade they are employed in by bare prohibition, without offering them at the same time some other trade which, if they please, may turn to account, we humbly propose that the linen manufacture be set on foot, and so encouraged in Ireland as may make it the general trade of that country as effectually as the woollen manufacture is, and must be, of England." Linen cloth and all other manufactures made of flax or hemp, without any mixture of wool, were to be exported to all places duty free, as indeed had already been provided by Act of Parliament with regard to England. One method by which Locke proposed to encourage the linen manufacture in Ireland runs so counter to modern notions with regard both to the education of the poor and to freedom of employment, that it may be interesting to the reader to see the suggestion at length:

"And, because the poorest earning in the several parts of the linen manufacture is at present in the work of the spinners, who therefore need, the greatest encouragement, and ought to be increased as much as possible, that therefore spinning schools be set up in such places and at such distances as the directors shall appoint, where whoever will come to learn to spin shall be taught gratis, and to which all persons that have not forty shillings a year estate shall be obliged to send all their children, both male and female, that they have at home with them, from six to fourteen years of age, and may have liberty to send those also between four and six if they please, to be employed there in spinning ten hours in the day when the days are so long, or as long as it is light when they are shorter: provided always that no child shall be obliged to go above two miles to any such school."

Then there follow many other minute and paternal regulations of the same kind, the object of which was to turn the whole Irish nation into spinners, and to supply with linen not only "the whole kingdom of England," but foreign markets as well. The Irish authorities, however, were meanwhile preparing a scheme of their own, and, after controversies between the English and Irish officials, extending over more than two years, Locke's plan was finally laid aside in favour of that of Louis Crommelin. Besides the attempt to monopolise the woollen trade for England and the linen trade for Ireland, much of the time of the Council was devoted to schemes for the protection of native industries, by forbidding or throwing obstacles in the way of importation and exportation. But Locke and his colleagues were here only following the track marked out for them by the ordinary opinion of the time.

The main subject which occupied the attentions of the Council in the autumn of 1697 was the employment of the idle or necessitous poor. From the beginning of its sessions, it had been collecting evidence on this subject, and, in September of this year, it was decided that each commissioner should draw up a scheme of reform, to be submitted to the Council. As had been the case with his report on the Irish linen manufacture, Locke's was the one selected. From a variety of causes, however, his suggestions were never carried into effect, and the various efforts of William's Government to deal with the gigantic problem of pauperism proved abortive.

Locke's paper of suggestisns assumes as a datum what was always regarded at this time as an axiom of poor-law legislation, namely, that it is the duty of each individual parish to maintain and employ its own poor, having, as a set-off, the right of coercing the able-bodied to work. Pernicious and partial as this principle was we should have more occasion for surprise if we found Locke contravening it than conforming to it. The merit of his paper is that it offers excellent suggestions for minising the evils necessarily attaching to the system then in vogue. The recent growth of pauperism he refers to "relaxation of discipline and corruption of manners, virtue and industry being as constant companions on the one side as vice and idleness are on the other. The first step, therefore," he continues, "towards the setting of the poor on work ought to be a restraint of their debauchery by a strict execution of the laws provided against it, more particularly by the suppression of superfluous brandy-shops and unnecessary ale-houses, especially in country parishes not lying upon great roads." He then proposes a series of provisions, sufficiently stringent, for the purpose of compelling the idle and able-bodied poor to work, stating that, upon a very moderate computation, about one half of those who receive relief from the parishes are able to earn their own livelihoods. In maritime counties, all those not physically or mentally incapacitated, who were found begging out of their own parish without a pass, were to be compelled to serve on board one of his Majesty's ships, under strict discipline, for three years. In the inland counties, all those so found begging were to be sent to the nearest house of correction for a like period. But, besides the able-bodied paupers, there were a great number not absolutely unable or unwilling to do something for their livelihood, and yet prevented by age or circumstances from wholly earning their own living. For these he proposes to find employment in the wooden or other manufactures, so as, at all events, to diminish the cost of their maintenance to the public, and at the same time increase the industrial resources of the country. One of the most distinctive features of Locke's scheme was the proposal to set up working-schools for spinning or knitting, or some other industrial occupation, in each parish, "to which the children of all such as demand relief of the parish, above three and under fourteen years of age, whilst they live at home with their parents, and are

not otherwise employed for their livelihood by the allowance of the overseers of the poor, shall be obliged to come." The children were to be fed at school, and this mode of relief was to take the place of the existing allowance in money paid to a father who had a large number of children, which; we are not surprised to learn, was frequently spent in the alehouse, whilst those for whose benefit it was given were left to perish for want of necessaries. The food of the children of the poor at that time, we are told, was seldom more than bread and water, and often there was a very scanty supply of that. Another advantage which Locke proposed to effect by the institution of these schools was the moral and religious instruction of the children. They would be obliged to come constantly to church every Sunday, along with their schoolmasters or dames, "whereby they would be brought into some sense of religion, whereas ordinarily now, in their idle and loose way of bringing up, they are as utter strangers both to religion and morality as they are to industry." One further provision of this scheme may be noticed, as offering some mitigation of the parochial system of relief which then obtained, namely, "that in all cities and towns corporate the poor's tax be not levied by distinct parishes, but by one equal tax throughout the whole corporation."

The anxiety of the king to retain Locke on the Commission has already been mentioned. It would appear that they were in not infrequent conference, and we know that the king entertained a very high opinion both of his integrity and of his political capacity. A good deal of mystery attaches to one of their interviews, but the explanation of it proffered by Mr. Fox-Bourne possesses, at any rate, considerable plausibility. One bitter January morning, in the winter of 1697–98, while Locke was at Oates, he received a pressing summons from the king to repair to Kensington. He was at the time suffering more than ordinarily from the bronchial affection to which he was constantly subject, and Lady Masham attempted to dissuade him from running the risk of the journey, but in vain. When he returned, the only account that he would give of the interview was that "the king had a desire to talk with him about his own health, as believing that there was much similitude in their cases." It appears, however, from a letter addressed by Locke to Somers a few days after his return to Oates, that the king had offered him some important employment, and that he had excused himself on the ground of his weak health, and his inexperience in that kind of business, the business being such as required "skill in dealing with men in their various humours, and drawing out their secrets." Mr. Fox-Bourne forms the reasonable conjecture that Locke had been asked to go as right-hand man to William Bentinck, Earl of Portland, who had just been nominated as special ambassador to the Court of France. The peace of Ryswick had been ratified in the previous November, and the mission to Louis XIV. was, of course, one requiring great tact and sagacity. William had strongly urged Locke, some years before, to represent him on another very important mission, the one to the Elector of Branden-

burg, and it may be that, on the present occasion, no fitter person occurred to him. Any way, the employment was one which would have advanced Locke in riches and honour; but as such, glad as he might have been to serve his country disinterestedly to the best of his power, it had no attractions for him. "He must have a heart strongly touched with wealth or honours who, at my age, and labouring for breath, can find any great relish for either of them."

On one occasion Locke accompanied the king, the latter going *incognito* to a meeting of the Society of Friends, where they listened to the famous Quaker preacheress, Rebecca Collier. Locke afterwards sent her a parcel of sweetmeats, with a very complimentary letter, and is said to have found the meeting so agreeable that it removed his objections to a female ministry.

With his resignation of the Commissionership of the Board of Trade, in the summer of 1700, Locke's public life comes to an end. His friend Somers had been sacrificed to the incessant and malignant attacks of the Tories, and dismissed from the Chancellorship in the previous spring; and to those statesmen who were inspired by a sincere and simple desire for the well-being of their country the political outlook had become anything but cheerful. The condition of Locke's health was quite a sufficient reason for his desiring to be relieved of the anxieties of office; but we can hardly doubt that, on other grounds as well, he was glad to escape from so intricate a maze as the field of politics bade fair soon to become.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTROVERSY WITH STILLINGFLEET.—OTHER LITERARY OCCUPATIONS.— DOMESTIC LIFE.— PETER KING.— LATTER YEARS.— DEATH.

In order to resume the thread of Locke's literary and domestic life, it is now necessary to go back two or three years. I have already spoken of no less than three literary controversies in which he found himself engaged, one on fianancial, and two on religious questions. Of the latter, one was occasioned by the publication of the *Letter on Toleration*, the other by that of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*. The *Essay* also had been attacked by Norris and other writers, including one very acute antagonist, John Serjeant, or Sergeant, a Roman Catholic priest; but to these critics Locke did not see fit to reply. The strictures on Norris only appear among his posthumous works. But in the autumn of 1696 Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, in his *Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, pointedly drew attention to the principles of the *Essay*, as favouring anti-Trinitarian doctrine. Stillingfleet's position and reputation appeared to demand an answer, and before the year, according to the old style, was out, Locke's *Letter to the Bishop of Worcester* was published. The Bishop's Answer, Locke's Reply to the Answer, and the Bishop's "Answer to Mr. Locke's Second Letter, wherein his notion of ideas is proved to be inconsistent with itself, and with the articles of the Christian faith," all followed, one on the other, within a few months. The last letter of the series is "Mr. Locke's Reply to the Bishop of Worcester's Answer to his Second Letter," published in 1699. Stillingfleet died soon after the publication of this pamphlet, and thus the voluminous controversy came to an end. There can be no doubt that the antagonists were unequally matched. Stillingfleet was clumsy both in handling and argument, and constantly misrepresented or exaggerated the statements of his adversary. On the other hand, Locke, notwithstanding an unnecessary prolixity which wearies the modern reader, shows admirable skill and temper. He deals tenderly with his victim, as if he loved him, but, none the less, never fails to despatch him with a moral stab. Stillingfleet, indeed, was no metaphysician, and not very much of a logician. He did not see at all clearly where the orthodox doctrines were affected, and where they remained unaffected, by Locke's philosophy, and he no doubt considerably exaggerated the bearing of Locke's direct

statements upon them. At the same time, it is impossible to deny that his instincts were perfectly sound in apprehending grave dangers to the current theological opinions, and still more, perhaps, to the established mode of expressing them, from the "new way of ideas." Religious, and even devout, as are those portions of the *Essay* in which Locke has occasion expressly to mention the leading principles of the Christian faith, yet his handling of many of the metaphysical terms and notions which modern divines, whether Catholic or Protestant, had taken on trust from their predecessors, the fathers and schoolmen, was well calculated to alarm those who had the interest of theological orthodoxy at heart. The playful freedom with which he discusses the idea of substance seemed, not unreasonably, to strike at the terminology of the Athanasian Creed, while, most unreasonably, his resolution of personal identity into present and recollected states of consciousness appeared inconsistent with the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead. A far more powerful solvent, however, of the unreflecting and complacent orthodoxy, into which established churches, and, in fact, all prosperous religious communities, are apt to lapse, was to be found in the general drift and tendency rather than in the individual tenets of Locke's philosophy. And this fact, though only very dimly and confusedly, Stillingfleet appears to have seen. To insist that words shall always stand for determinate ideas, to attempt to trace ideas to their original sources, and to propose to discriminate between the certainty and varying probabilities of our beliefs, according to the nature of the evidence on which they rest, is to encourage a state of mind diametrically the opposite of that which humbly and thankfully accept the words of the religious teacher, without doubt and without inquiry. To the religious teacher whose own beliefs rest on no previous inquiry, who has never acquired "a reason for the faith that is in him," such a state of mind must necessarily be not only inconvenient but repulsive: and hence we have no right to feel surprised when an attempt is made to expose it to popular odium, or to fasten on those who entertain it injurious or opprobrious epithets. The old-standing feud, of which Plato speaks, between poetry and philosophy, has in great measure been transferred, in these latter times, to philosophy and theology. But in both cases the antagonism is an unnecessary one. The highest art is compatible with the most profound speculation. And so we may venture to hope that the simple love of truth, combined with the charity "which never faileth," will lead men not further away from the Divine presence, but nearer to, and into it.

Here I thankfully take leave of the mass of controversial literature, in the writing of which so much of Locke's latter life was spent. The controversies were not of his own seeking, and, from all that we know of his temper and character, must have been as distasteful to him as they are wearisome to us. But prolonged and reiterated controversy was of the habit of the time, and no man who cared candidly and unreservedly to express his opinions on any important question could hope to escape from it.

In the autumn of 1697, while the controversy with Stillingfleet was at its hottest, Locke wrote to Molyneux:—"I had much rather be at leisure to make some additions to my book of Education and my Essay on Human Understanding, than be employed to defend myself against the groundless, and, as others think, trifling quarrel of the bishop." He was at this time engaged on preparing the fourth edition of the *Essay* for the press. In addition to this task, or rather as part of it, he was also employing himself on writing the admirable little tract on the Conduct of the Understanding, the contents of which I shall notice in a subsequent chapter. This treatise, which was not published till after his death, was originally intended as an additional chapter to the *Essay*. Speaking of it in one of his letters to Molyneux, he says:—"I have written several pages on this subject; but the matter, the farther I go, opens the more upon me, and I cannot yet get sight of any end of it. The title of the chapter will be 'Of the Conduct of the Understanding,' which, if I shall pursue as far as I imagine it will reach, and as it deserves, will, I conclude, make the largest chapter of my Essay." It did not, however, appear in the new edition, nor did Locke ever reduce its parts into order, or put the finishing stroke to it. He may, perhaps, have intended to revise it for a subsequent edition of the *Essay*, but the fourth was the last which appeared during his lifetime.

Before speaking of the literary labours which occupied the last years of Locke's life, I may here conveniently recur to his domestic history. Of his quiet life with the Mashams little more need be said. Had Lady Masham been his daughter, she could not have tended him more carefully or lovingly; and had he been her father, he could not have entertained a more sincere solicitude for the welfare of her and her family. All Locke's friends were welcome at Oates, and seem to have been regarded quite as much as friends of the Meshams as of his own. And Oates appears in every respect to have been as much Locke's home as that of its owners. In the whole of his correspondence, there does not appear the slightest trace of those petty piques and annoyances, those small *désagrêments*, which are so apt to grow up among people who live much together, even when, at bottom, they entertain a deep love and admiration for each other. On the side of the Mashams we know that the tide of affection ran equally smooth. Lady Masham and Esther acted as his nurses, and with one or other of them he seems to have shared all his pursuits. The intimacy and sweetness of these relations surely imply as rare an amount of amiability of temper and power of winning regard on the one side, as of patience and devotion on the other. But then Locke possessed the inestimable gift of cheerfulness, which renders even the invalid's chamber a joy to those who enter it. All the glimpses we obtain of the life at Oates represent it as a gay and pleasant one, none the less gay and pleasant because its enjoyments were modest and rational. After complaining to Molyneux of the persistent asthma which

confined him a close prisoner to the house during the winter of 1697–98, he adds, "I wish, nevertheless, that you were here with me to see how well I am; for you would find that, sitting by the fireside, I could bear my part in discoursing, laughing, and being merry with you, as well as ever I could in my life. If you were here (and if wishes of more than one could bring you, you would be here to-day) you would find three or four in the parlour after dinner who, you would say, passed their afternoons as agreeably and as jocundly as any people you have this good while met with." Locke's conversation is reported to have been peculiarly fascinating. He had a large stock of stories, and is said to have had a singularly easy and humorous way of telling them.

Among the more frequent guests at Oates at this time were Edward Clarke and his daughter Betty, Locke's "little wife," now fast growing up to womanhood, a son of Limborch, and a son of Benjamin Furly, both engaged in mercantile pursuits in London, and a young kinsman of Locke's own, Peter King, of whom I shall have more to say presently. One of the most anxiously expected guests, whose visits had been often promised and often deferred, was the correspondent of whom we have heard so much, William Molyneux. At length, after the rising of the British Parliament in the summer of 1698, the two friends met. Even on this occasion, Molyneux had been obliged to defer his promised visit for some weeks, on account of a recent trouble which he had brought on himself by the publication of a "home-rule" pamphlet, protesting against the interference of the English Parliament in Irish affairs. Both houses had joined in an address to the king, praying for punishment on the offender; but the king, possibly through Locke's intervention, had wisely taken no notice of the petition. Any way, after the prorogation, Molyneux seems to have felt sufficiently secure to venture on a journey across the Channel. He and Locke were together for some time both in London and at Oates. The friends, though they had been in such constant and intimate correspondence for six years, had never met before. We may easily imagine how warm was their greeting, how much they had to talk about, and how loath they were to separate. "I will venture to assert to you," wrote Molyneux on his return to Dublin, "that I cannot recollect, through the whole course of my life, such signal instances of real friendship as when I had the happiness of your company for five weeks together in London. That part thereof especially which I passed at Oates has made such an agreeable impression on my mind that nothing can be more pleasing." Shortly after writing this letter, Molyneux died at the early age of forty-two. "His worth and his friendship to me," writes Locke, in a letter to Burridge, the Latin translator of the *Essay*, "made him an inestimable treasure, which I must regret the loss of the little remainder of my life, without any hope of repairing it in any way." He then characteristically goes on to ask if there is any service he can render to Molyneux's son. "They who have the care of him cannot do me a greater pleasure than to give me the opportunity

to show that my friendship died not with his father." One of the most amiable and attractive traits in Locke's character is the eagerness which he always displayed in advising, encouraging, or helping forward the sons of his friends. Any opportunity of doing so always gave him the most evident satisfaction, as, from his correspondence, we see in the case of Frank Masham, the two young Furlys, young Limborch, and numerous others.

I must now no longer delay the introduction to the reader of Locke's young cousin, Peter King. Locke had an uncle, Peter Locke, whose daughter Anne had married Jeremy King, a grocer and salter in a substantial way of business at Exeter. Such a marriage was not necessarily any disparagement to Anne Locke's family, as the present line of demarcation between professional men and the smaller gentry, on the one side, and substantial retail tradesmen, on the other, hardly existed at that time. They had a son, Peter, born in 1669, who was consequently Locke's first cousin once removed. The boy seems for some time to have been employed in his father's business, but he had a voracious appetite for books, and showed a decided talent for the acquisition of learning. Locke, on one of his visits to Exeter, discovered these qualities, and persuaded Peter King's parents to allow him to change his mode of life, and study for one of the learned professions. Whether he went to any English school does not appear; but, during Locke's stay in Holland, he resided for some time in the University of Leyden. His studies there embraced at least classics, theology, and law; and when he returned to England, apparently in 1690, he brought back with him a pamphlet entitled *An Enquiry into the Constitution and Discipline of the Primitive Church.* As in this treatise he maintained that Presbyterianism was the original form of Church government, he probably never had any serious intention, notwithstanding his theological proclivities of entering holy orders in the Established Church. Any way, in October, 1694. he was entered a student of the Middle Temple; and in Trinity Term, 1698, he was called to the bar. During his residence in London as a law student, he must have been frequently at Oates, and Locke must have frequently visited him in his chambers in the Temple. The first extant letter from Locke to King, dated June 27, 1698, at any rate, assumes intimacy and frequency of intercourse. "Your company here had been ten times welcomer than any the best excuse you could send; but you may now pretend to be a man of business, and there can be nothing said to you." Very sound was the advice with which the elder relative concluded his letter to the young barrister: "When you first open your mouth at the bar, it should be in some easy plain matter that you are perfectly master of." King's success in his profession was very rapid, and he soon became one of the most popular counsel on the Western Circuit. In the general election of 1700 he attained one of the first objects of ambition at which a rising young barrister generally aims—a seat in the House of Commons. Owing, probably, to his cousin's influence with the Whig leaders, he was returned for the small borough

of Beer Alston, in Devonshire, which he continued to represent in several successive Parliaments. Locke, writing to him shortly before the meeting of Parliament, entreats him not to go circuit, as he had intended to do, but to devote himself at once to his Parliamentary duties. "I am sure there was never so critical a time, when every honest member of Parliament ought to watch his trust, and that you will see before the end of the vacation." The loss to his pocket, his good relative intimates, delicately enough, shall be amply made up to him. King took his cousin's advice on this point, but, fortunately and wisely, did not take it on another. "My advice to you is not to speak at all in the House for some time, whatever fair opportunity you may seem to have." King was advised to communicate his "light or apprehensions" to some "honest speaker," who might make use of them for him. Locke, we must remember, was now becoming old, and though not, like many old men, jealous of his juniors, he could not escape the infirmity of all old men, that of exaggerating the youthfulness of youth, and so of insisting too stringently on the modesty becoming those in whom he was interested. King broke the ice soon after the meeting of Parliament, and Locke had the prudence and good-nature to show no resentment at his advice having been neglected. His cousin, however, never became a great Parliamentary speaker; but he soon gained a reputation for being a thoroughly sound lawyer and a thoroughly honest man. He rose successively to be Recorder of London, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Lord High Chancellor of England. He was also ennobled as Lord King of Ockham, and, by a very curious coincidence, his four sons in succession bore the same title. To one of his descendants, his great-grandson, also named Peter, we owe the publication of many documents and letters connected with Locke, and the biography so well known as *Lord King's Life of Locke*. The present representative of the family, and the direct descendant in the male line of Peter King, is the Earl of Lovelace. As Peter King was, to all intents, Locke's adopted son, we may thus regard Locke as the founder of an illustrious line in the English peerage, and there are certainly few, if any, of our ennobled families who can point to a founder whose name is so likely to be the heritage of all future ages.

King kept Locke well posted in all that went on in Parliament, and seems also to have been a constant visitor at Oates. Soon after his election, Sir Francis Masham had considerately proposed to Locke that his cousin should "steal down sometimes with him on Saturday, and return on Monday." On one of these occasions, in the Easter holidays of 1701, King was accompanied by young Lord Ashley, now become the third Earl of Shaftesbury. Locke had then surmounted his winter troubles, and his old pupil pronounces him as well as he had ever known him.

Amongst Locke's correspondents in these years was the celebrated physician, Dr. Sloane, now Secretary of the Royal Society, afterwards created Sir Hans Sloane. In writing to him at the end of the century, evidently in answer to a request, Locke proposes a

scheme for rectifying the calendar. Notwithstanding the reformation which had already taken place in many foreign countries, it will be recollected that the English year then began on the 25th of March, instead of the 1st of January, and that, by reckoning the year at exactly 365¼ days, or at 11 m. 14 sec. longer than its actual length, our time lagged ten days behind that of most other European countries, as well as the real solar time. The inconvenience, especially in transactions with foreign merchants, had become very great. The advent of the new century, inasmuch as the centenary year would be counted as a leap-year in England, but not in other countries where the new style or Gregorian calendar prevailed, would add an eleventh day to the amount of discrepancy, and hence the subject was now attracting more than ordinary attention. Locke's remedy was to omit the intercalar day in the year 1700, according to the rule of the Gregorian calendar, as also for the ten next leap-years following, "by which easy way," he says, "we should in forty-four years insensibly return to the new style." "This," he adds, "I call an easy way, because it would be without prejudice or disturbance to any one's civil rights, which, by lopping off ten or eleven days at once in any one year, might perhaps receive inconvenience, the only objection that ever I heard made against rectifying our account." He also suggested that the year should begin, as in most other European countries, on the 1st of January. No change, however, was made till, by an Act of Parliament passed in 1750–51, it was ordered that the year 1752 should begin on the 1st of January, and that the day succeeding the 2d of September in that year should be reckoned as the 14th. Locke's other correspondence with Sloane shows the interest which he still took in medical matters, and how ready he always was to expend time and thought on attending to the ailments of his poor neighbours at Oates.

During the latter years of Locke's life his principal literary employment consisted in paraphrasing and writing commentaries on some of St. Paul's epistles. He thought that this portion of Scripture offered peculiar difficulties, and finding, as he says, that he did not understand it himself, he set to work, rather for his own sake, and perhaps also that of the household at Oates, than with any view of publication, to attempt to clear up its obscurities. The labour was a work of love; and to a man of Locke's devout disposition, with almost a child-like confidence in the guidance of Scripture, the occupation must have afforded a peculiar solace in the intervals of his disease, and as he felt that he was rapidly approaching the confines of that other world which had so long been familiar to his thoughts. Though he was induced to consent to the publication of these commentaries, and though he himself prepared an introduction to them, they did not appear till after his death. They were then issued by instalments, coming out at intervals between 1705 and 1707 inclusively.

Locke's political interests, always keen, were specially active in the winter of 1701–02. England was just then on the point of

engaging in the war of the Spanish Succession. In the previous September an alliance against France and Spain had been concluded between the emperor and the two great maritime powers, England and Holland. Almost immediately after the conclusion of this treaty, James the Second had died at St. Germain, and not only had the French king allowed his son to be proclaimed King of England but had himself received him with royal honours at the court of Versailles. The patriotic and Protestant feeling of the country was thoroughly roused, and the new Parliament, which met on the 30th of December, was prepared to take the most energetic measures for the purpose of supporting the national honor and the Protestant succession. The king's speech, on opening the Parliament, excited an outburst of enthusiasm throughout the nation. He conjured the members to disappoint the hopes of their enemies by their unanimity. As he was ready to show himself the common father of his people, he exhorted them to cast out the spirit of party and division, so that there might no longer be any distinction but between those who were friends to the Protestant religion and the present establishment, and those who wished for a popish prince and a French government. The speech was printed in English, Dutch, and French, framed, and hung up, as an article of furniture, in the houses of good Protestants, both at home and abroad. Locke, writing to Peter King four days after the meeting of Parliament, asks him to send a copy of the king's speech, "printed by itself, and without paring off the edges." He suggests that, in addition to what the two Houses had done, the city of London and counties of England should, "with joined hearts and hands return his Majesty addresses of thanks for his taking such care of them." "Think of this with yourself," he says, "and think of it with others who can and ought to think how to save us out of the hands of France, into which we must fall, unless the whole nation exert its utmost vigour, and that speedily." He is specially urgent on his cousin not to leave town, or to think of circuit business, till the kingdom has been put in an effectual state of defence. "I think it no good husbandry for a man to get a few fees on circuit and lose Westminster Hall." By losing Westminster Hall he does not, apparently, mean losing the chance of a judgeship, but forfeiting those rights and liberties, and that personal and national independence which the Revolution had only so lately restored. "For, I assure you, Westminster Hall is at stake, and I wonder how any of the house can sleep till he sees England in a better state of defence, and how he can talk of anything else till that is done." But a majority, at least, of the House of Commons was fully alive to its responsibilities: enormous supplies were voted, and almost every conceivable measure was taken for securing the Protestant succession to the crown. A few days after Locke wrote the letter last quoted, King William died. His reflections on that event or on the political prospects under William's successor, we do not possess.

As the war proceeded, Locke's old friend, the Earl of Mon-

mouth, now become Earl of Peterborough, was entrusted with a naval expedition against the Spanish possessions in the West Indies. He had a great desire to see Locke before his departure, and, Locke being unable to come up to London, he and the Countess drove down to Oates about the middle of November, 1702. It is characteristic of the times that Locke was "much in pain" about their getting back safely to town, the days being then so short. His young friend, Arent Furly, who was also a protégé and frequent correspondent of Lord Shaftesbury, went out as Lord Peterborough's secretary, and seems to have acquitted himself in the position with marked diligence and success. The early promise which he gave, however, was soon blighted. This young play-fellow and foster-child, as he might also have been called, of Locke, died only a few years after him, in 1711 or 1712. Before accompanying Lord Peterborough on his expedition, he had been living for some time, first at Oates, and afterwards in lodgings in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of learning English.

It is gratifying to find that, during the autumn of this year, Locke had received a visit from Newton. During the discussion of the re-coinage question, and the active operations which followed for the purpose of carrying out the decisions of Parliament, they must have been thrown a good deal together. Montague declared that, had it not been for the energetic measures taken by Newton, as Warden of the Mint, the re-coinage would never have been effected. When, however, Newton came down to visit Locke at Oates, in 1702, their conversation seems to have turned mainly on theological topics. Locke showed Newton his notes upon the Corinthians, and Newton requested the loan of them. But, like most borrowers, he neglected to return them, nor did he take any notice of a letter from Locke, who was naturally very anxious to recover his manuscript. Peter King was asked to try to manage the matter. He was to call at Newton's residence in Jermyn Street, to deliver a second note, and to find out, if he could, the reasons of Newton's silence, and of his having kept the paper so long. But he was to do this "with all the tenderness in the world," for "he is a nice man to deal with, and a little too apt to raise in himself suspicions where there is no ground." The emissary was also, if he could do it with sufficient adroitness, to discover Newton's opinion of the Commentary. But he was by no means to give the slightest cause of offence. "Mr. Newton is really a very valuable man, not only for his wonderful skill in mathematics, but in divinity too, and his great knowledge in the Scriptures, wherein I know few his equals. And therefore pray manage the whole matter so as not only to preserve me in his good opinion, but to increase me in it; and be sure to press him to nothing but what he is forward in himself to do." In this letter Locke, notwithstanding the caution with which he felt it necessary to approach one of so susceptible a temperament, says, "I have several reasons to think him truly my friend." And in this generous judgment there can be little doubt he was right. The friends probably never met

again, but Newton is said to have paid a visit, on one of his journeys perhaps from London to Cambridge, to Locke's tomb at High Laver. Peter King succeeded in recovering the manuscript, and at the same time or soon afterwards there came a letter, criticising one of Locke's interpretations, but expressing a general opinion that the "paraphrase and commentary on these two epistles is done with very great care and judgment."

Something should here be said of two friends whom Locke had made in later life, one of whom seems to have been constantly about him during his last years. The less intimate of these was Samuel Bolde, a Dorsetshire clergyman, who had come forward, in 1697, to defend the *Reasonableness of Christianity* against Edwards' attacks, and who afterwards did Locke a similar service in replying to the assailants of the *Essay*. He was one of Locke's correspondents, and once at least paid him a visit at Oates. Bolde's outspokenness and independence of judgment naturally excited Locke's admiration. There are some memorable sentences in a letter written to him in 1699. "To be learned in the lump by other men's thoughts, and to be in the right by saying after others, is the much easier and quieter way; but how a rational man, that should inquire and know for himself, can content himself with a faith or a religion taken upon trust, or with such a servile submission of his understanding as to admit all and nothing else but what fashion makes passable among men, is to me astonishing. I do not wonder you should have, in many points, different apprehensions from what you meet with in authors. With a free mind, which unbiassedly pursues truth, it cannot be otherwise." After expanding these thoughts, and applying them to the study of Scripture, he goes on to advise Bolde how to supply a mental defect that he had complained of, namely, that "he lost many things because they slipped from him." The simple method was to write them down as they occurred. "The great help to the memory is writing," Bacon has said. Locke emphasises the dictum, and adds, "If you have not tried it, you cannot imagine the difference there is in studying with and without a pen in your hand." "The thoughts that come unsought, and as it were dropped into the mind, are commonly the most valuable of any we have, and therefore should be secured, because they seldom return again."

The other friend, whose acquaintance had only been made during these later years, was Anthony Collins, who was not more than twenty-eight years of age when Locke died. Collins afterwards attained great celebrity as a Deistical writer, but none of his theological works appeared till some time after Locke's death. Locke, with his sincere and simple belief in the divine origin of the Christian Revelation, would doubtless, had he lived to see them, have been shocked with their matter, and still more with their style. But at the present time Collins presented himself to him simply in the light of an ingenious young man, with rare conversational powers and wide interests, and with what Locke valued far more, an eager desire to find out the truth. No one can have read the tracts, *An*

Enquiry concerning Human Liberty, and *Liberty and Necessity*, without recognising the acuteness and directness of Collins' intellect, and these, we know, were qualities always peculiarly acceptable to Locke. Moreover, to encourage and bring forward younger men had invariably been one of his main delights. Hence we may, perhaps, abate our surprise at the apparently exaggerated language in which he addresses this friend, who was so much his junior in age, and who must have become known to him only so recently. "Why do you make yourself so necessary to me? I thought myself pretty loose from the world: but I feel you begin to fasten me to it again. For you make my life, since I have had your friendship, much more valuable to me than it was before." "If I were now setting out in the world, I should think it my great happiness to have such a companion as you, who had a relish for truth, would in earnest seek it with me, from whom I might receive it undisguised, and to whom I might communicate freely what I thought true. Believe it, my good friend, to love truth for truth's sake is the principal part of human perfection in this world and the seed-plot of all other virtues, and, if I mistake not, you have as much of it as I ever met with in anybody." Then he adds pathetically, but with a tone of hopefulness in the labours of others which is not commonly found amongst old men, "When I consider how much of my life has been trifled away in beaten tracks, where I vamped on with others only to follow those that went before us, I cannot but think I have just as much reason to be proud as if I had travelled all England, and, if you will, France too, only to acquaint myself with the roads and be able to tell how the highways lie, wherein those of equipage, and even the herd too, travel. Now, methinks—and these are often old men's dreams—I see openings to truth and direct paths leading to it, wherein a little industry and application would settle one's mind with satisfaction, and leave no darkness or doubt. But this is at the end of my day, when my sun in setting; and though the prospect it has given me be what I would not for anything be without—there is so much irresistible truth, beauty, and consistency in it—yet it is for one of your age, I think I ought to say for yourself, to set about it." What were those "openings to truth and direct paths leading to it?" Were they merely the delusive visions of an old man's fancies, or had he really formed wider conceptions of science, and pictured to himself more precise and fertile methods of reaching it? The sciences, it is needless to observe, have grown vastly since Locke's day; the methods of scientific research are far more numerous, more accurate, richer in their results. Had Locke, in his thoughts at this time, at all anticipated the courses which enquiry and knowledge have since taken?

The letter to Collins, from which I have just quoted, was written on Oct. 29, 1703. Within a year of that date the end came. The wonder, indeed, is that, with his persistent malady, aggravated apparently in these latter years with other disorders, Locke's life had continued so long. The reasons are probably to be sought in his

unfailing cheerfulness, in the variety of interests which diverted his mind from the thought of his own ailments, and in the judicious manner in which he regulated his exercise and diet. Of these personal traits something may conveniently here be said. The remarkable cheerfulness of his disposition, his lively sense of humour, and his power of extracting amusement from all that was going on around him, have frequently come before us in the course of this biography. His temper was not moody, like that of so many men of letters, but pre-eminently sociable. When not actually engaged in his studies, he always liked to be in company, and enjoyed especially the society of young people and children. He had a happy knack of talking to his companions for the time being on the subjects which interested them most, and in this way he gained a very extensive knowledge of the various kinds of business, and of a variety of arts and crafts. To working people he was often able to give useful hints as to their own employments. This union of conversational qualities, grave and gay, invariably made him a welcome addition to any company, young or old, gentle or simple. An even temper, and a combination of happy gifts of this kind, will carry a man through much suffering, bodily and mental. From any mental troubles, on his own account, Locke seems, during these latter years of his life, to have been remarkably free. From bodily suffering he was rarely exempt, but he always endured it with resignation, and endeavoured to obviate its causes by every precaution, which his prudence or medical skill suggested. Thus, we have seen that, whenever it was possible, he preferred the quiet life and pure air of the country to the many attractions which the capital must have offered to a man with his wide acquaintance, and with so many political and literary interests. In diet he practised an abstemiousness very rare among men of that age. His ordinary drink was water, and to this habit he attributed not only his length of years, but also the extraordinary excellence of his eyesight. Till recently, a curious relic of Locke's water-drinking habits was preserved in the shape of a large mortar of spongy stone, which acted as a natural filter, and which he used to call his brew-house. He was assiduous in taking exercise, and was specially fond of walking and gardening. In the latter years of his life he used to ride out slowly every day after dinner. When advising his friend Clarke about his health, he says, "I know nothing so likely to produce quiet sleep as riding about gently in the air for many hours every day," and then, like a truly wise doctor, he adds, "If your mind can be brought to contribute a little its part to the laying aside troublesome ideas, I could hope this may do much." At last, when he was no longer able to sit on horseback, he commissioned Collins to have an open carriage specially made for him, the principle on which it was to be constructed being that "convenient carries it before ornamental."

In November, 1703, the Heads of Houses at Oxford—who at that time constituted the governing body, and through whose re-

pressive and reactionary administration the evil genius of Laud then and long afterwards continued to cast a blight on the University—resolved to discourage the reading of Locke's *Essay*. The attempt was futile, as they relied, not on coercion, but on the influence of their authority, which appears to have been held very cheap. Locke was now far too eminent a man to be troubled by so anile a demonstration of folly. "I take what has been done as a recommendation of my book to the world," he says, in a letter to Collins; and then he promises himself and his friend much merriment on the subject when they next meet.

Locke's last literary labour appears to have been his *Fourth Letter for Toleration*. Jonas Proast, after a long interval, had returned to the charge in a pamphlet published in 1704; and Locke, unfortunately, thought it incumbent on him to reply, though he had long ceased to pay any regard to the assailants of the *Essay*. The *Letter* is unfinished. Its last words cannot have been written long before Locke's death.

The winter of 1703–04 seems to have been peculiarly trying to his health. He hardly expected to live through it; but he still maintained his cheerfulness, and followed his usual employments. On the 11th of April, 1704, he made his will—perhaps not his first. To most of his friends, relatives, and dependents he left some remembrance; but the bulk of his personal property he left to Frank Masham and Peter King, the latter of whom was sole executor and residuary legatee. All his manuscripts were left to King. Many of these were published for the first time by the seventh Lord King, in his *Life of Locke*. His land he designedly did not will, and so it devolved by law, in equal shares, on his two cousins, Peter King and Peter Stratton. His funeral was to be conducted without any ostentation, and what it would otherwise have cost was to be divided amongst four poor labourers at Oates.

The approach of summer had not its usual restorative effect upon him. On the other hand, all the bad symptoms of his disease increased. To use his own expression, "the dissolution of the cottage was not far off." In a letter, written on the 1st of June, he earnestly pressed King to come to him, that he might pass some of the last hours of his life "in the conversation of one who is not only the nearest but the dearest to me of any man in the world." Both King and Collins seem to have visited him frequently during the last months of his life; and their society being cheerful, and the topics of their conversation interesting, he appears to have taken great pleasure in their company. He did not, however, find equal enjoyment in the visit of Dr. Edward Fowler, Bishop of Gloucester, who, like himself, was in a bad state of health. "I find two groaning people make but an uncomfortable concert." The moral he draws is, that men should enjoy their health and youth while they have it, "to all the advantages and improvements of an innocent and pleasant life," remembering that merciless old age is in pursuit of them. The lamp of life was now dimly

flickering, but once more it burnt up in the socket before going out forever. Peter King had been married on the 10th of September, and he and his bride must be received with all due honours at Oates. King was asked to cater for his own wedding feast, and goodly and dainty is the list of delicacies which he was to buy. But something, perhaps, might be omitted in which Mrs. King took special delight. "If there be anything that you can find your wife loves, be sure that provision be made of that, and plentifully, whether I have mentioned it or no." The feast was to be cooked by "John Gray, who was bred up in my Lord Shaftesbury's kitchen, and was my Lady Dowager's cook." The wedded pair arrived at Oates towards the end of the month, and well can we picture to ourselves the pride and pleasure with which the genial old man entertained the wife of his cousin and adopted son—the adopted son whom he had rescued from the grocer's shop at Exeter, and whose future eminence he must now have pretty clearly foreseen. A few days after King left Oates, he solemnly committed to him by letter the care of Frank Masham. "It is my earnest request to you to take care of the youngest son of Sir Francis and Lady Masham in all his concerns, as if he were your brother. Take care to make him a good, an honest, and an upright man. I have left my directions with him to follow your advice, and I know he will do it; for he never refused to do what I told him was fit." Then, turning to King himself, he says, "I wish you all manner of prosperity in this world, and the everlasting happiness of the world to come. That I loved you, I think you are convinced."

Peter King certainly executed the dying request of his cousin, so far as Frank Masham's material interests were concerned. Soon after he became Lord Chancellor, Frank Masham was appointed to the newly constituted office of Accountant-General in the Court of Chancery, a lucrative post, conferring the same status as a Mastership.

Locke retained his faculties and his cheerfulness to the last; but he grew gradually weaker day by day. "Few people," says Lady Masham, "do so sensibly see death approach them as he did." A few days before his death he received the sacrament from the parish minister, professing his perfect charity with all men, and his "sincere communion with the whole Church of Christ, by whatever name Christ's followers call themselves." In the last hours he talked much with the Mashams about their eternal concerns. As for himself he had lived long enough, and enjoyed a happy life; but he looked forward to a better. At length, on the afternoon of the 28th of October, the spirit left him, and the earthly tabernacle was dissolved. His body is buried in the churchyard of High Laver, in a pleasant spot on the south side of the church. The Latin epitaph on the wall above the tomb was written by himself. It tells us that he had lived content with his own insignificance: that, brought up among letters, he had advanced just so far as to make an acceptable offering to truth alone: if the traveller wanted

an example of good life, he would find one in the Gospel; if of vice, would that he could find one nowhere; if of mortality, there and everywhere.

"His death," says Lady Masham, "was, like his life, truly pious, yet natural, easy, and unaffected; nor can time, I think, ever produce a more eminent example of reason and religion than he was, living and dying."

CHAPTER VIII.

ESSAY ON THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

"WERE it fit to trouble thee," says Locke in his Epistle to the Reader, "with the history of this *Essay*, I should tell thee that five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had a while puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course; and that, before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were or were not fitted to deal with. This I proposed to the company, who all readily assented; and thereupon it was agreed that this should be our first inquiry."

This passage may serve not only to describe the occasion of Locke's *Essay*, but also to indicate the circumstance which constitutes the peculiar merit and originality of Locke as a philosopher. The science which we now call Psychology, or the study of mind, had hitherto, amongst modern writers, been almost exclusively subordinated to the interests of other branches of speculation. Some exception must, indeed, be made in favour of Hobbes and Gassendi, Descartes and Spinoza; but all these authors treated the questions of psychology somewhat cursorily, while the two former seem usually to have had in view the illustration of some favourite position in physics or ethics, the two latter the ultimate establishment of some proposition relating to the nature or attributes of God. We may say then, without much exaggeration, that Locke was the first of modern writers to attempt at once an independent and a complete treatment of the phenomena of the human mind, of their mutual relations, of their causes and limits. His object was, as he himself phrases it, "to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge: together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent." This task he undertakes not in the dogmatic spirit of his predecessors, but in the critical spirit which he may be said to have almost inaugurated. As far as it is possible for a writer to divest himself of prejudice, and to set to his work with a candid and open mind, seeking help and information from all quarters, Locke does so. And the effect of his candour on his first readers must have been enhanced by the fact, not always favourable to his precision, that, as far as he can,

he throws aside the technical terminology of the schools, and employs the language current in the better kinds of ordinary literature and the well-bred society of his own time. The absence of pedantry and of the *parti pris* in a philosophical work was at that time so rare a recommendation that, no doubt these characteristics contributed largely to the rapid circulation and the general acceptance of the *Essay*.

The central idea, which dominates Locke's work, is that all our knowledge is derived from experience. But this does not strike us so much as a thesis to be maintained as a conclusion arrived at after a vast amount of patient thought and inquiry. Have we any ideas independent of experience? or, as Locke phrases it, are there any Innate Principles in the mind?

"It is an established opinion amongst some men that there are in the Understanding certain Innate Principles, some Primary Notions, κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι, characters, as it were, stamped upon the mind of man, which the Soul receives in its very first being and brings into the world with it."

This is the opinion which Locke examines and refutes in the first, or introductory, book of the *Essay*. It has often been objected that he mistakes and exaggerates the position which he is attacking. And so far as his distinguished predecessor, Descartes, is concerned (though to what extent Locke has him in mind, his habit of not referring to other authors by name prevents us from knowing), this is undoubtedly the case. For Descartes, though he frequently employs and accepts the expression "innate notions" or "innate ideas," concedes, as so many philosophers of the same school have done since, that this native knowledge is only implicit, and requires definite experiences to elicit it. Thus, in his notes on the Programme of Regius, he expressly compares these innate notions or ideas with the nobility which is characteristic of certain ancient stocks, or with diseases, such as gout or gravel, which are said to be "innate" in certain families, not "because the infants of those families suffer from these diseases in their mother's womb, but because they are born with a certain disposition or tendency to contract them." Here Descartes seems to have been on the very point of stumbling on the principle of heredity which, in the hands of recent physiologists and psychologists, has done so much towards reconciling rival theories on the nature and origin of knowledge and clearing up many of the difficulties which attach to this branch of speculation. It must be confessed, however, that in his better-known works he often employs unguarded and unexplained expressions which might easily suggest the crude form of the *à priori* theory attacked by Locke. Still more is this the case with other authors, such as Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Dr. Ralph Cudworth, whose works were in general circulation at the time when Locke was composing his *Essay*. Lord Herbert, though indeed he acknowledges that "common notions" (the expression by which he designates *à priori* principles) require an object to elicit them into consciousness, seems invariably to regard them as ready-made ideas

implanted in the human mind from its very origin. They are given by an independent faculty, Natural Instinct, which is to be distinguished from Internal Sense, External Sense, and Reasoning ("discursus"), the sources of our other ideas. They are to be found in every man, and universal consent is the main criterion by which they are to be discriminated. In fact, there can be no doubt that the dogma of Innate Ideas and Innate Principles, in the form attacked by Locke, was a natural, if not the legitimate, interpretation of much of the philosophical teaching of the time, and that it was probably the form in which that teaching was popularly understood. It lay, moreover, as Locke's phrase is, along the "common road," which was travelled by the majority of men who cared about speculative subjects at all, and from which it was novel, and therefore dangerous, to diverge.

The most effective, perhaps, of Locke's arguments against this doctrine is his challenge to the advocates of Innate Principles to produce them, and show what and how many they are. Did men find such innate propositions stamped on their minds, nothing could be more easy than this. "There could be no more doubt about their number than there is about the number of our fingers; and 'tis like, then, every system would be ready to give them as by tale." Now "'tis enough to make one suspect that the supposition of such innate principles is but an opinion taken up at random; since those who talk so confidently of them are so sparing to tell us which they are." (Bk. I., ch. iii., § 14.) The great majority, indeed, of those who maintain the existence of innate principles and ideas attempt no enumeration of them. Those who do attempt such an enumeration differ in the lists which they draw up, and, moreover, as Locke shows in the case of the five practical principles of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, give no sufficient reason why many other propositions, which they regard as secondary and derived, should not be admitted to the same rank with the so-called innate principles, which they assume to the primary and independent. Locke is here treading on safer ground than in many of his other criticisms. The fact is that it is impossible clearly to discriminate between those propositions which are axiomatic and those which are derived—or, in the language of the theory which Locke is combating, between those which are innate and those which are adventitious. Race, temperament, mental capacity, habit, education, produce such differences between man and man, that a proposition which to one man appears self-evident and unquestionable will by another be admitted only after considerable hesitation, while a third will regard it as doubtful, or even false. Especially is this the case, as Locke does not fail to point out, with many of the principles of religion and morals, which have now been received by so constant a tradition in most civilized nations that they have come to be regarded as independent of reason, and, if not "ingraven on the mind" from its birth, at least exempt from discussion and criticism. The circumstance, however, that they are not universally acknowledged shows that to mankind in general, at any rate, they are not

axiomatic, and that, however clear and convincing the reasons for them may be, at all events those reasons require to be stated. It was this determined and vigorous protest against multiplying assumptions and attempting to withdraw a vast mass of propositions, both speculative and practical, from the control and revision of reason, that perhaps, constituted the most distinctive and valuable part of Locke's teaching.

Having cleared from his path the theory of Innate Principles, Locke proceeds, in the Second Book, to inquire how the mind comes to be furnished with its knowledge. Availing himself of a metaphor which had been commonly employed by the Stoics, but which reaches as far back as Aristotle and Plato, and even as Æschylus, he compares the mind to "white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas," and then asks:

"Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless Fancy of Man has painted on it, with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of Reason and Knowledge? To this I answer in one word, from *Experience:* In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either about external or sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by our selves, is that which supplies our Understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the Fountains of Knowledge from which all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring."

"First, our Senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things, according to those various ways in which those objects do affect them. And thus we come by those ideas we have of Yellow, White, Heat, Cold, Soft, Hard, Bitter, Sweet, and all those which we call Sensible Qualities, which when I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean they from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those Perceptions. This great source of most of the Ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the Understanding, I call SENSATION."

"Secondly, the other Fountain, from which Experience furnisheth the Understanding with Ideas, is the Perception of the operations of our own minds within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got; which operations, when the soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the Understanding with another set of ideas which could not be had from things without; and such are Perception, Thinking, Doubting, Believing, Reasoning, Knowing, Willing, and all the different actings of our own minds, which we being conscious of, and observing in our selves, do from these receive into our Understandings as distinct ideas as we do from bodies affecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has wholly in himself. And though it be not sense, as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, and might properly enough be called Internal Sense. But as I call the other *Sensation*, so I call this REFLECTION, the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself. By Reflection, then, in the following part of this Discourse, I would be understood to mean that notice which the mind takes of its own operations and the manner of them, by reason whereof there come to be Ideas of these operations in the Understanding.

These two, I say, namely, external material things, as the objects of Sensation, and the operations of our own minds within, as the objects of Reflection, are to me the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginning. The term operations here I use in a large sense, as comprehending not barely the actions of the mind about its ideas, but some sort of passions arising sometimes from them, such as is the satisfaction or uneasiness arising from any thoughts."

"The Understanding seems to me not to have the least glimmering of any ideas which it doth not receive from one of these two. External objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities, which are all those different perceptions they produce in us; and the mind furnishes the Understanding with ideas of its own operations." (Bk. II., ch. i., §§ 2–5.)

In deriving our knowledge from two distinct sources, Sensation and Reflection, Locke is advancing a position altogether different from that of what is properly called the Sensationalist school of philosophers. Gassendi and Hobbes before him, Condillac and Helvétius after him, found the ultimate source of all our knowledge in the impression of sense. The emphatic words of Hobbes, standing in the forefront of the *Leviathan*, are:—"The original of all the thoughts of men is that which we call Sense, for there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense." And Condillac, aiming at a theory still more simple, derives from sensations not only all our knowledge but all our faculties. "The other fountain," then, of Locke has, we must recollect, a peculiar significance as distinguishing his psychology from that of the sensationalist writers who preceded and who followed him. His theory of the origin of knowledge may fairly be called an experiential, but it cannot with any truth be called a sensationalist theory.

The rest of the Second Book of the *Essay* is mainly taken up with the attempt to enumerate our simple ideas of Sensation and Reflection, and to resolve into them our other ideas, however complex. To follow Locke into these details would be to re-write the *Essay*. I propose simply to direct the attention of the reader to a few salient points.

Of "Simple Ideas of Sensation," some "come into our minds by one Sense only." Such are the various colours, sounds, tastes, and smells, Heat and Cold, and the sensation of Resistance or Impenetrability, which Locke denominates Solidity. "The Idea we get by more than one sense are of Space or Extension, Figure, Rest, and Motion."

The "Simple Ideas of Reflection," which the mind acquires, when "it turns its view inward upon itself, and observes its own actions about those ideas it has received from without," are mainly two, namely, Perception or Thinking, and Volition or Willing.

"There be other simple ideas, which convey themselves into the mind by all the ways of Sensation and Reflection, namely, Pleasure or Delight, Pain or Uneasiness, Power, Existence, Unity. (Bk. II., ch. vii., § 1.)

"These simple Ideas, the materials of all our knowledge, are suggested and furnished to the mind only by those two ways above mentioned, namely, Sensation and Reflection. When the Understanding is once stored with these simple ideas, it has the power to repeat, compare, and unite them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so can make at pleasure new complex ideas. But it is not in the power of the most exalted Wit or enlarged Understanding, by any quickness or variety of thoughts, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind, not taken by the ways before mentioned. Nor can any force of the Understanding destroy those that are there: the dominion of man, in this little world of his own understanding, being much-what the same as it is in the great world of visible things, wherein his power, however managed by art and skill, reaches no farther than to compound and divide the materials that are made to his hand, but can do nothing towards the making the least particle of new matter or destroying one atom of what is already in being. The same inability will every one find in himself who shall go about to fashion in his Understanding any simple idea not received in by his senses from external objects or by reflection from the operations of his own mind about them." (Bk. II., ch. ii., § 2.)

In the reception of these simple ideas, Locke regards the mind as merely passive. It can no more refuse to have them, alter or blot them out, than a mirror can refuse to receive, alter, or obliterate the images reflected on it. The Understanding, before the entrance of simple ideas, is like a dark room, and external and internal sensation are the windows by which light is let in. But when the light has once penetrated into this dark recess, the Understanding has an almost unlimited power of modifying and transforming it. It can create complex ideas, and that in an infinite variety, out of its simple ideas, and this it does chiefly by combining, comparing, and separating them.

"This shows man's power, and its way of operation, to be much what the same in the material and intellectual world. For the materials in both being such as he has no power over, either to make or destroy, all that man can do is either to unite them together, or to set them by one another, or wholly separate them." (Bk. II., ch. xii., § 1.)

The complex ideas are classified under three heads, modes, which may be either simple or mixed, substances, and relations. Here, however, my analysis must stop, and I must content myself with giving a few examples of the manner in which Locke attempts to resolve "complex ideas" into "simple" ones.

The idea of Infinity, to take one of his most celebrated resolutions, is merely a simple mode of Quantity, as Immensity is a simple mode of Space, and Eternity of Duration. All alike are negative ideas, arising whenever we allow the mind "an endless progression of thought," without any effort to arrest it. "How often soever" a man doubles an unit of space, be it a "mile, or diameter of the earth, or the *Orbis Magnus*," or any otherwise multiplies it, "he finds that, after he has continued this doubling in his thoughts and enlarged his idea as much as he pleases, he

has no more reason to stop, nor is one jot nearer the end of such addition, than he was at first setting out; the power of enlarging his idea of Space by farther additions remaining still the same, he hence takes idea of infinite space." (Bk. II., ch. xvii., § 3.)

With the idea of "Substance" Locke is fairly baffled. If we examine our idea of a horse, a man, a piece of gold, &c., we are able to resolve it into a number of simple idea, such as extension, figure, solidity, weight, colour, &c., co-existing together. But, according to Locke, who, in this respect, was merely following in the track of the generally received philosophy of his time, there is, in addition to all these qualities, a *substratum* in which they inhere, or, to use his own language, "wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result." Now of the various qualities we can form a clear idea and give an intelligible account of the substratum? Locke here is bold enough to break off from the orthodox doctrine of the time, and confess candidly that we cannot. The idea of this Substratum or Substance is a "confused idea of something to which the qualities belong, and in which they subsist." The name Substance denotes a Support, "though it be certain we have no clear or distinct idea of that thing we suppose a support."

"So that if any one will examine himself concerning his notion of pure Substance in general, he will find he has no other idea of it at all but only a supposition of he knows not what Support of such qualities which are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are commonly called Accidents. If any one should be asked what is the subject wherein Colour or Weight inheres, he would have nothing to say but the solid extended parts. And if he were demanded what is it that Solidity and Extension inhere in, he would not be in a much better case than the Indian who, saying that the world was supported by a great elephant, was asked what the elephant rested on? To which his answer was, a great tortoise. But, being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-backed tortoise, replied, something, he knew not what. And thus here, as in all other cases, where we use words without having clear and distinct ideas, we talk like children; who, being questioned what such a thing is, which they know not, readily give this satisfactory answer, that it is something; which in truth signifies no more, when so used, either by children or men, but that they know not what, and that the thing they pretend to know and talk of is what they have no distinct idea of at all, and so are perfectly ignorant of it and in the dark. (Bk. II., ch. xxiii., § 2.)

No wonder that the next step in philosophy was to get rid altogether of this "something, we know not what." For, if we know not what it is, how do we know that it exists and is not a mere fiction of the Schools? This step was taken by Berkeley, as respects matter, and by Hume the same negative criticism which Berkeley confines to matter was boldly, and, as it seems to me, far less successfully and legitimately extended to mind. Indeed, were it not for his express assurance to the contrary, we should often be tempted to think that Locke himself regarded this distinction of Substance and Accident, so far, at least, as it affects Matter and its attributes, as untenable, and was anxious to insinuate a doubt as to the very existence of the "unknown somewhat."

In this chapter, Locke mantains that there is no more difficulty, if indeed so much, in the notion of immaterial spirit as a body. "Our idea of Body, as I think, is an extended solid substance, capable of communicating motion by impulse; and our idea of our Soul, as an immaterial Spirit, is of a substance that thinks, and has a power of exciting motion in body by Will or Thought." (§ 22.) Now, it is "no more a contradiction that Thinking should exist separate and independent from Solidity, than it is a contradiction that Solidity should exist separate and independent from Thinking, they being both but simple ideas independent one from another. And, having as clear and distinct ideas in us of Thinking as of Solidity, I know not why we may not as well allow a thinking thing without solidity, that is immaterial, to exist, as a solid thing without thinking, that is matter, to exist; especially since it is harder to conceive how Thinking should exist without Matter, than how Matter should think." (§ 32.)

In the Fourth Book (ch. iii., § 6), however, he gave great scandal by suggesting the possibility that Matter might think, that it was not much more repugnant to our conceptions that God might, if he pleased, "superadd to Matter a Faculty of Thinking, than that he should superadd to it another substance with a faculty of thinking." At the same time, he regarded it as no less than a contradiction to suppose that Matter, "which is evidently in its own nature void of sense and thought," should be the "eternal first thinking Being," or God Himself; and, in his First Letter to the Bishop of Worcester, he grants that *in us* (as distinguished from the lower animals) it is in the highest degree probably that the thinking substance" is immaterial. Materialism, therefore, as ordinary understood, is certainly no part of Locke's system.

In discussing the idea of Substance, Locke seems generally to be thinking more of Matter than Mind. But, in an early part of the *Essay* (Bk. II., ch. xiii., § 18), he very rightly begs those who talk so much of Substance "to consider whether applying it, as they do, to infinite incomprehensible God, to infinite Spirit, and to Body, it be in the same sense, and whether it stands for the same idea when each of those three so different beings are called Substances." As applied respectively to Matter and to Mind (whether finite or infinite), it appears to me that the word Substance assumes a very different meaning, and that the absurdities which it is possible to fix on the distinction between Matter and its attributes by no means extended to the distinction between Mind and its operations. For an union of certain forces or powers affecting our organisms in certain ways seems to exhaust our conception of external objects (the notion of externality, I conceive, being quite independent of that of the Substrate "matter"), but no similar enumeration of mental acts and feelings seems adequately to take the place of that "Self," or "I," of which we regard these as merely phases and modifications. It would much conduce to clearness in philosophical discussions if, at least amongst those who admit the dualism of matter and mind, the word Snbstance, whenever applied

to incorporal objects, were replaced by the word Mind, and, whenever applied to corporeal objects, by the word Matter.

The Second Book closes, in the Fourth and subsequently editions, with a short but very interesting Chapter on the "Association of Ideas." The student of Mental Philosophy will find it instructive to compare this Chapter with the previous account given by Hobbes (*Human Nature* ch. iv.; *Leviathan*, Pt. I., ch. iii.), and the subsequent account given by Hume (*Human Nature*, Pt. I., § 4; *Essays on Human Understanding*, § 3), of the same phenomena. Locke appears to have been the first author to use the exact * expression "Association of Ideas," and it is curious to find in the chapter (§ 5) the word "inseparable," so familiar to the readers of recent works on psychology, already applied to designate certain kinds of association. Some ideas, indeed, have, he says, a natural correspondence, but others, that "in themselves are not at all of kin," "come to be so united in some men's minds that one no sooner at any time comes into the understanding than the whole Gang, always inseparable, show themselves together."

The following passage on what may be called the associations of antipathy affords a good instance of Locke's power of homely and opposite illustration:

"Many children imputing the pain they endured at school to their books they were corrected for, so join those ideas together, that a book becomes their aversion, and they are never reconciled to the study and use of them all their lives after; and thus reading becomes a torment to them, which otherwise possibly they might have made the great pleasure of their lives. There are rooms convenient enough, that some men cannot study in, and fashions of vessels, which though never so clean and commodious, they cannot drink out of, and that by reason of some accidental ideas which are annexed to them and make them offensive. And who is there that hath not observed some man to flag at the appearance or in the company of some certain person not otherwise superior to him, but because, having once on some occasion got the ascendant, the idea of authority and distance goes along with that of the person, and he that has been thus subjected is not able to separate them."

Had Locke's *Essay* ended with the Second Book, we should hardly have detected in it any incompleteness. It might have been regarded as an analytical work on the nature and origin of our ideas, or, in other words, on the element of our knowledge. There are, however, a third and fourth book—the former treating "Of Words," the latter "Of Knowledge and Opinion." Locke's notion appears to have been that, after treating of "Ideas," mainly as regarded in themselves, it was desirable to consider them as combined in Judgments or Propositions, and to estimate the various

* Sir W. Hamilton refers to La Chambre (*Système de l'Ame*: Paris, 1664) as having anticipated Locke in the use of this expression. In Liv. IV., ch. ii., art. 9, La Chambre speaks of "l'Union et la Liaison des Images," but I cannot find that he approaches any nearer to the now established phraseology

degrees of assent which we give or ought to give to such judgments, when formed. The Fourth Book thus, to a certain extent, takes the place, and was probably designed to take the place, of the Logic of the Schools. "But," to quote Locke's own language in the Abstract of the *Essay*, "when I came a little nearer to consider the nature and manner of human knowledge, I found it had so much to do with propositions, and that words, either by custom or necessity, were so mixed with it, that it was impossible to discourse of knowledge with that clearness we should, without saying something first of words and language."

The last three Chapters of the Third Book are remarkable for their sound sense, and may still be read with the greatest advantage by all who wish to be put on their guard against the delusions produced by misleading or inadequate language—those "Idola Fori" which Bacon describes as the most troublesome of the phantoms which beset the mind in its search for truth. Some of the best and freshest of Locke's thoughts, indeed, are to be found in this book, and especially in the less technical parts of it.

The Fourth Book, under the head of Knowledge, treats of a great variety of interesting topics: of the nature of knowledge, its degrees, its extent, and reality; of the truth and certainty of Universal Propositions; of the logical axioms, or laws of thought; of the evidence for the existence of a God; of Faith and Reason; of the Degrees of Assent; of Enthusiasm; of Error. Into these attractive regions it is impossible that I can follow my author, but the reader who wishes to see examples of Locke's strong practical sense and, at the same time, to understand the popularity so soon and so constantly accorded to the *Essay*, should make acquaintance at least with the four chapters last named.

From the task of description I now pass to that of criticism, though this must be confined within still narrower limits than the former, and indeed, amongst the multiplicity of subjects which invite attention, I must confine myself to one only: the account of the ultimate origin of our knowledge, which forms the main subject of the *Essay*.

Locke, as we have seen, derived all our knowledge from Experience. But experience, with him, was simply the experience of the individual. In order to acquire this experience, it was indeed necessary that we should have certain "inherent faculties." But of these "faculties" he gives no other account than that God has "furnished" or "endued" us with them. Thus, the *Deus ex machina* was as much an acknowledged necessity in the philosophy of Locke, and was, in fact, almost as frequently invoked, as in that of his antagonists. Is there any natural account to be given of the way in which we come to have these "faculties, of the extraordinary facility we possess of acquiring simple and forming complex ideas, is a question which he appears never to have put to himself. Inquiries of this kind, however, we must recollect, were foreign to the men of his generation, and, in fact,

have only recently become a recognized branch of mental philosophy. Hence it was that his system left so much unexplained. Not only the very circumstance that we have "inherent faculties" at all, but the wide differences of natural capacity which we observe between one man or race and another, and the very early period at which there spring up in the mind such notions as those of space, time, equality, causality, and the like, are amongst the many difficulties which Locke's theory, in its bare and unqualified form, fails satisfactorily to answer. It was thus comparatively easy for Kant to show that the problem of the origin of knowledge could not be left where Locke had left it; that our *à posteriori* experiences presuppose and are only intelligible through certain *à priori* perceptions and conceptions which the mind itself imposes upon them; or, to use more accurate language, through certain *à priori* elements in our perceptions and conceptions, which the mind contributes from itself. Thus the child appears, as soon as it is capable of recognising any source of its impressions, to regard an object as situated in space, an event as happening in time, circumstances which have occurred together as likely to occur together again. But Kant's own account was defective in leaving this *à priori* element of our knowledge unexplained, or, at least, in attempting no explanation of it. The mind, according to him, is possessed of certain Forms and Categories, which shape and co-ordinate the impressions received from the external world, being as necessary to the acquisition of experience, as experience is necessary to eliciting them into consciousness. But here his analysis ends. He does not ask how the mind comes to be possessed of these Forms and Categories, nor does he satisfactorily determine the precise relation in which they stand to the empirical elements of knowledge. When studying his philosophy, we seem indeed to be once more receding to the mysterious region of Innate Ideas. But the mystery is removed at least several stages back, if we apply to the solution of these mental problems the principle of Heredity, which has recently been found so potent in clearing up many of the difficulties connected with external nature. What are the "Innate Ideas" of the older philosophers, or the Forms and Categories of Kant, but certain *tendencies* of the mind to group phenomena, the "fleeting objects of sense," under certain relations and regard them under certain aspects? And why should these tendencies be accounted for in any other way than that by which we are accustomed to account for the tendency of an animal or plant, belonging to any particular species, to exhibit, as it developes, the physical characteristics of the species to which it belongs? The existence of the various mental tendencies and aptitudes, so far as the individual is concerned, is, in fact, to be explained by the principle of hereditary transmission. But how have these tendencies and aptitudes come to be formed in the race? The most scientific answer is that which, following the analogy of the theory now so widely admitted with respect to the physical structure of animals and plants, assigns their formation to the continuous operation,

through a long series of ages, of causes acting uniformly, or almost uniformly, in the same direction—in one word, of Evolution. This explanation may have its difficulties but it is at any rate an attempt at a natural explanation where no other such attempt exists, and it has the merit of falling in with the explanations of corresponding phenomena now most generally accepted amongst scientific men in other departments of knowledge.

According to this theory, there is both an *à priori* and an *à posteriori* element in our knowledge, or, to speak more accurately, there are both *à priori* and *à posteriori* conditions of our knowing, the *à posterori* condition being, as in all systems, individual experience, the *à priori* condition being inherited mental aptitudes, which, as a rule, become more marked and persistent with each successive transmission. Now Locke lays stress simply upon the *à posteriori* condition, though he recognises a certain kind of *à priori* condition in our "natural faculties," and the simple ideas furnished by reflecting on their operations. The very important condition, however, of inherited aptitudes facilitating the formation of certain general conceptions concurrently, or almost concurrently, with the presentation of individual experiences, did not occur to him as an element in the solution of the problem he had undertaken to answer, nor, in that stage of speculation, could it well have done so. His peculiar contribution to the task of solving this question consisted in his skilful and popular delineation of the *à posteriori* element in knowledge, and in his masterly exposure of the insufficiency of the account of the *à priori* element, as then commonly given. Locke's own theory was afterwards strained by Hume and Hartley, and still more by his professed followers in France, such as Condillac and Helvètius, till at last, in the opinion of most competent judges, it snapped asunder. Then, under the massive, though often partial and obscure, treatment of Kant, came the rehabilitation of the *à priori* side of knowledge. In recent times, mainly by aid of the light thrown on it from other branches of inquiry, a more thorough and scientific treatment of psychology has done much, as I conceive, towards completing and reconciling the two divergent theories which at one time seemed hopelessly to divide the world of philosophic thinkers. And yet, as it appears to me, the ultimate mystery which surrounds the beginnings of intellectual life on the globe has by no means been removed.

As closely connected with this general criticism of Locke's system, or rather as presenting the defects just criticised under another form, I may notice the tendency of the *Essay* to bring into undue prominence the passive receptivities of the Mind, and to ignore its activity and spontaneity. The metaphor of the *tabula rasa*, the sheet of "white paper," once admitted, exercises a warping influence over the whole work. The author is so busied with the variety of impressions from without, that he seems sometimes to ignore the reaction of the mind from within. And yet this one-sideness of Locke's conception of mind may easily be exaggerated. "When the Understanding is once stored with simple ideas, it has the power to

repeat, compare, and unite them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so can make at pleasure new complex ideas." (Bk. II., ch. ii., § 2.) Moreover, amongst the simple ideas themselves are the ideas of Reflection, "being such as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations." The system, in fact, assumes an almost ceaseless activity of mind, after the simple ideas of sensation have once entered it. But where it fails is in not recognising that mental reaction which is essental to the formation of even the simple ideas of sensation themselves, as well as that spontaneous activity of mind which often seems to assert itself independently of the application of any stimulus from without. Here again a more scientific psychology than was possible in Locke's day comes to our aid, and shows, as is done by Mr. Bain and other recent writers, that the nerves, stored with energy, often discharge themselves of their own accord, and that movement is at least as much an original factor in animal life as is sensation, while sometimes it even precedes it in time. Had the constant interaction of mental activity and mental receptivity, producing a campound in which it is often almost impossible to disentangle the elements, been duly recognised by Locke, it would certainly have made his philosophy less simple, but it would have made it more true to facts. Physiology, however, was in his days in far too backward a state itself to throw much light upon Psychology. And the reaction against the prevailing doctrine of Innate Ideas naturally led to a system in which the influences of external circumstances, of education and habit, were exaggerated at the expense of the native powers, or as they might more appropriately be called the inherited aptitudes, and the spontaneous activity of the mind.

Here, tempting as it is to follow my author along the many tracks of psychological, metaphysical, and logical discussion which he always pursues with sagacity, candour, and good sense, if not always with the consistency and profundity which we should require from later writers, my criticism must necessarily end.

Before, however, finally dismissing the *Essay*, I must pause to ask what was the main work in the history of philosophy and thought which it accomplished. Many of its individual doctrines doubtless could not now be defended against the attacks of hostile criticism, and some even of those which are true in the main, are inadequate or one-sided. But its excellence lies in its tone, its language, its method, its general drift, its multiplicity of topics, the direction which it gave to the thoughts and studies of reflecting men for many generations subsequent to its appearance. Of the tone of candour and open-mindedness which prevades it, of the unscholastic and agreeable form in which it is written, and of the great variety of interesting topics which it starts, I have spoken already. Its method, though not absolutely new, even in modern times, for it is at least, to some extent, the method of Descartes, if not, in a smaller degree, ofHobbes and Gassendi, was still not common at the time of its appearance. Instead of stating a series of preconceived opinions, or of dogmas borrowed from some dominant school, in a systematic

form, Locke sets to work to examine the structure of his own mind, and to analyse into their elements the ideas which he finds there. This, the *introspective* method, as it has been called, though undoubtedly imperfect, for it requires to be supplemented by the study of the minds of other men, if not of the lower animals, as made known by their acts, and words, and history, is yet a great advance on the purely *à priori*, and often fanciful, methods which preceded it. Nor do we fail to find in the *Essay* some employment of that *comparative* method to which I have just alluded: witness the constant references to children and savages in the first book, and the stress which is laid on the variety of moral sentiment existing amongst mankind. This inductive treatment of philosophical problems, mainly introspective, but in some measure also comparative, which was extremely rare in Locke's time, became almost universal afterwards. Closely connected with the method of the book is its general purport. By turning the mind inward upon itself, and "making it its own object," Locke surmises that all its ideas come either from without or from experience of its own operations. He finds, on examination and analysis, no ideas which cannot be referred to one or other of these two sources. The single word "experience" includes them both, and furnishes us with a good expression for marking the general drift of his philosophy. It was pre-eminently a philosophy of experience, both in its method and in its results. It accepts nothing on authority, no foregone conclusions, no data from other sciences. It digs as it were, into the mind, detaches the ore, analyses it, and asks how the various constituents came there. The analytical and pyschological direction thus given to philosophy by Locke was followed by most of the philosophical writers of the eighteenth century. However divergent in other respects, Hume and Berkleey, Hartley and Reid, the French Sensationalists, Kant, all commence their investigations by inquiring into the constitution, the capacities, and the limits of the Human Mind. Nor can any system of speculation be constructed on a sound basis which has neglected to dig about the foundations of human knowledge, to assertain what our thoughts can and what they cannot compass, and what are the varying degrees of assurance with which the various classes of propositions may be accepted by us. Two cautions, indeed, are necessary in applying this procedure. We must never forget that the mind is constantly in contact with external nature, and that therefore a constant action and reaction is taking place between them; and we must never omit to base our inductions on an examination of other minds as well as our own, bringing into the account, as far as possible, every type and grade of mental development.

It was not, however, only its general spirit and direction which Locke impressed on the philosophy of the eighteenth century. He may almost be said to have recreated that philosophy. There is hardly a single French or English writer (and we may add Kant) down to the time of Dugald Stewart, or even of Cousin, Hamilton, and J. S. Mill, who does not profess either to develope Locke's sys-

tem, or to supplement, or to criticise it. Followers, antagonists, and critics alike seem to assume on the part of the reader a knowledge of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, and to make that the starting-point of their own speculations. The office which Bacon assigns to himself with reference to knowledge generally might well have been claimed by Locke with reference to the science of mind. Both of them did far more than merely play the part of a herald, but of both alive it was emphatically true that they "rang the bell to call the other wits together."

CHAPTER IX.

LOCKE'S OPINIONS ON RELIGION AND MORALS, AND HIS THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS.

In the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Bk. IV., ch. x., Locke attempts to prove the existence of a God, which, though God has given us no innate idea of Himself, he regards as "the most obvious truth that reason discerns," and as resting on evidence equal to mathematical certainty. Morality is, he maintains, entirely based upon the Will of God. If there were no God, there would, for him, be no morality, and this is the reason of his denying to Atheists the protection of the State. In the chapter on the Existence of God he says expressly that this truth is so fundamental that "all genuine morality depends thereon," and almost at the beginning of the *Essay* (Bk. I., ch. iii., § 6), while acknowledging that "several moral rules may receive from mankind a very general approbation, without either knowing or admitting the true ground of morality," he maintains that such true ground "can only be the Will and Law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hand rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender." Again, "the Rule prescribed by God is the true and only measure of Virtue." But how are we to ascertain this rule? "God has by an inseparable connexion joined Virtue and Public Happiness together," and hence we have only to ascertain, by the use of the natural reason, what on the whole conduces most to the public welfare, in order to know the Divine Will. The rules, when arrived at, have a "moral and eternal obligation," and are enforced by fear of "the Hell God has ordained for the punishment of those that transgress them."

This form of Utilitarianism, resting on a theological basis and enforced by theological sanctions, is precisely that which afterwards became so popular and excited so much attention, when adopted in the well-known work of Paley. According to this system, we do what is right simply because God commands it, and because He will punish us if we disobey His orders. "By the fault is the rod, and with the transgression a fire ready to punish it." But, notwithstanding the divine origin and the divine sanction of morality, its measure and test are purely human. Each man is required by the Law of God to do all the good and prevent all the evil that he can, and, as good and evil are resolved into pleasure and pain, the ultimate test of virtue or moral conduct comes to be its conduciveness

to promote the pleasures and avert the pains of mankind. Bentham, whose ethical system, it may be noticed, differed mainly from that of Locke and Paley by not being based on a theological foundation, extends the scope of morality to all sentient creatures, capable of pleasure and pain.

I shall not here criticise Locke's theory so far as it is common to other utilitarian systems of ethics, but shall simply content myself with pointing out that its influence on subsequent writers has seldom, if ever, been sufficiently recognised. The theological foundation, however, on which it rests, and which is peculiar among the more prominent moralists of modern times to Locke and Paley, is open to an objection so grave and obvious, that it is curious it did not occur to the authors themselves. If what is right and wrong, good and evil, depends solely on the Will of God, how can we speak of God Himself as good? Goodness, as one of the Divine attributes, would then simply mean the conformity of God to His own Will. An elder contemporary of Locke, Ralph Cudworth, so clearly saw the difficulties and contradictions involved in this view of the nature and origin of morality, that he devotes a considerable portion of his *Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* (which, however, was not published till 1731) to its refutation. And, possibly, Locke himself may have been conscious of some inconsistency between this theory (the ordinary one amongst the vulgar, though a comparatively rare one amongst philosophers) and the atttribution of goodness to God. For, in his chapter on our knowledge of the existence of God, he never expressly mentions the attribute of goodness as pertaining to the Divine Nature, though in other parts of the *Essay* it must be acknowledged that he incidentally does so. Moralists and philosophical theologians have generally escaped the difficulties of Locke's theory by making right or moral goodness depend not on the Will but on the Nature of God, or else by regarding it as an ultimate fact, incapable of explanation, or, lastly, by resolving it into the idea of happiness or pleasure, which itself is then regarded as an ultimate fact in the constitution of sentient beings.

Two other characteristic doctrines of Locke's ethical system ought here to be mentioned, though it is impossible, within the space at my command, to discuss them. One is that morality is a science capable of demonstration. The other, which is elaborately set out in the chapter on Power in the *Essay* (Bk. II., ch. xxi.), is that, though the Agent is free to act as he wills, the Will itself is invariably determined by motives. This solution of the well-worn controversy on the Freedom of the Will is almost identical with that offered by Hobbes before and by Hume afterwards, and is usually known as Determinism.

We have seen that the main sanctions of morality, with Locke, are the rewards and punishments of a future state. But how are we assured of future existence? Only by Revelation. "Good and wise men," indeed, "have always been willing to believe that the soul was immortal;" but "though the Light of Nature gave

some obscure glimmering, some uncertain hopes of a future state, yet Human Reason could attain to no clearness, no certainty about it, but it was Jesus Christ alone who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (Third Letter to the Bp. of Worcester.) But if the main sanctions of morality are those of a future state, and if it is Christians alone who feel anything approaching to an assurance of such a state, surely morality must come with somewhat weak credentials to the rest of mankind. And Locke doubtless believed this to be the case. But then, if this be so, Christians ought to be prepared to tolerate a much lower morality than their own in dealing with men of other faiths—one of the many inconvenient consequences which result from founding morality on a theological basis.

Under the head of Locke's theological writings may be included the *Treatise on the Reasonableness of Christianity* with the two *Vindications* of it—the *Essays on Toleration*, and the *Commentaries on some of the Epistles of St. Paul. The Reasonableness of Christianity* was published in 1695, and may be taken as expressing Locke's most matured opinions on the questions of which it treats, though, in reading it, we must always bear in mind the caution and reticence which any writer of that time who diverged from the strict path of orthodoxy was obliged to observe. There can be no doubt that his object in this work was to commend what he regarded as the fundamental truths of Christianity to the attention of reflecting men, and to vindicate to the Christian religion what he conceived to be its legitimate influence over mankind. But, in trying to effect this his main object, he seems also to have wished to correct what he regarded as certain popular errors, and to bring back Christianity to the norm of the Scriptures, instead of implicity following the Fathers, the Councils, and the received theology of the Church and the Schools. He attempted, he tells us, to clear his mind of all preconceived notions, and, following the lead of the Scriptures, of which he assumed the infallibility, to see whither they would lead him. We may certainly trust his own assertion that he had no thoughts of writing in the interest of any particular party, though, at the same time, it was evidently his aim to extract from the Scriptures a theory as much as possible in accordance with the requirements of human reason, or, in other words, to reconcile the divine light with the natural light of man. The main results at which he arrived may be stated very briefly, as follows. Adam had been created immortal, but, by falling from the state of perfect obedience, "he lost paradise, wherein was tranquillity and the tree of life; that is, he lost bliss and immortality." "In Adam all die," and hence all his descendants are mortal. But this sentence is to be taken in its literal sense, and not in the signification that "every one descended of him deserves endless torment in hell-fire." For it seems "a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery." Much less can death be interpreted as a

necessity of continual sinning. "Can the righteous God be snpposed, as a punishment of our sin, wherewith He is displeased, to put man under the necessity of sinning continually, and so multiplying the provocation?" Here it will be seen Locke strikes at the root of the doctrines of the taint and guilt of original sin, doctrines which had long been stoutly opposed by the Arminians or Remonstrants with whom he had associated in Holland. But though it would have been an injustice to condemn men, for the fault of another, to a state of misery "worse than non-being," it was no wrong to deprive them of that to which they had no right, the exceptional condition of immortality. Adam's sin, then, subjected all men to death. But in Christ they have again been made alive, and "the life which Jesus Christ restores to all men is that life which they receive again at the resurrection." Now the conditions of our obtaining this gift are faith and repentance. But repentance implies the doing works meet for repentance; that is to say, leading a good life. And faith implies a belief not only in the one invisible, eternal, omnipotent God, but also in Jesus as the Messiah, who was born of a virgin, rose again from the grave, and ascended into heaven. When Christ came on earth, the minds of men had become so far blinded by sense and lust and superstition that it required some visible and unmistakable assertion of God's majesty and goodness to bring them back to true notions of Him and of the Divine Law which He had set them. "Reason, speaking ever so clearly to the wise and virtuous, had never authority enough to prevail on the multitude." For the multitude were under the dominion of the priests, and the "priests everywhere, to secure their empire, had excluded reason from having anything to do in religion." "In this state of darkness and error, in reference to the 'true God,' our Saviour found the world. But the clear revelation he brought with him dissipated this darkness, made the 'one invisible true God' known to the world; and that with such evidence and energy, that polytheism and idolatry have nowhere been able to withstand it." And, as he revealed to mankind a clear knowledge of the one true God, so also he revealed to them a clear knowledge of their duty, which was equally wanting.

"Natural religion, in its full extent, was nowhere that I know taken care of by the force of natural reason. It sould seem, by the little that has hitherto been done in it, that it is too hard a task for unassisted reason to establish morality in all its parts, upon its true foundation, with a clear and convincing light. And it is at least a surer and shorter way to the apprehensions of the vulgar and mass of mankind, that one manifestly sent from God, and coming with visible authority from him, should, as a king and law-maker, tell them their duties and require their obedience, than leave it to the long and sometimes intricate deductions of reason to be made out to them. Such trains of reasoning the greater part of mankind have neither leisure to weigh, nor, for want of education and use, skill to judge of. . . . You may as soon hope to have all the day-labourers and tradesmen, the spinsters and dairy-maids, perfect mathematicians, as to have them perfect in ethics this way. Hearing plain commands is the

sure and only course to bring them to obedience and practice. The greater part cannot learn, and therefore they must believe."

It is true that reason quickly apprehends and approves of these truths, when once delivered, but "native and original truth is not so easily wrought out of the mine as we, who have it delivered already dug and fashioned into our hands, are apt to imagine;" moreover, "experience shows that the knowledge of morality by mere natural light (how agreeable soever it be to it) makes but a slow progress, and little advance in the world."

The evidence of Christ's mission is to be found in the miracles, the occurrence and the divine origin of which Locke, both here and in the paper on Miracles published among his Posthumous Works, appears to have thought it impossible to gainsay. "The miracles he did were so ordered by the divine providence and wisdom, that they never were nor could be denied by any of the enemies or opposers of Christianity." And "this plain matter of fact being granted, the truth of our Saviour's doctrine and mission unavoidably follows." But once acknowledge the truth of Christ's mission, and the rule of life is evident. "To one who is once persuaded that Jesus Christ was sent by God to be a King, and a Saviour of those who do believe in him, all his commands become principles; there needs no other proof for the truth of what he says, but that he said it. And then there needs no more, but to read the inspired books, to be instructed; all the duties of morality lie there clear, and plain, and easy to be understood."

This, then, is Locke's scheme of a plain and reasonable Christianity. "These are articles that the labouring and illiterate man may comprehend. This is a religion suited to vulgar capacities, and the state of mankind in this world, destined to labour and travail." "The writers and wranglers in religion," indeed, "fill it with niceties, and dress it up with notions, which they make necessary and fundamental parts of it, as if there were no way into the church but through the academy or lyceum:" but the religion which he had enunciated was, Locke conceived, the religion of Christ and the Apostles, of the New Testament and of Common-Sense.

That Locke, though he had no respect for the dogmas of the Church, never seriously questioned the supernatural birth of Christ, the reality of the Christian miracles, or the infallibility of the Scriptures, is abundantly evident. On the last point his testimony is quite as emphatic as on the former two. In the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, speaking of the writers of the Epistles, he says:—"These holy writers, inspired from above, writ nothing but truth." And to the same effect, in his Second Reply to Stillingfleet, he writes:—"My lord, I read the revelation of the holy scripture with a full assurance that all it delivers is true." The word "infallible" is applied, without any misgivings or qualification, to the contents of Scripture, though he assumes to each individual believer full liberty of interpretation. During his residence in Holland, as we have already seen, he appears to have entertained some doubts on

this subject, but, at a later period, those doubts appear to have been finally laid.

Notwithstanding, however, the sincerity and simplicity of Locke's religious faith, the doctrines which he maintained must have represented but a very attenuated Christianity to the partisans of the two great religious parties which were at that time nominally the strongest in England. A Christianity which did not recognise the hereditary taint of original sin, and which passed over the mystery of the Atonement in silence, must have been as distasteful to one party as a Christianity which ignored Church authority and the exclusive privileges of the apostolical succession must have been to the other. And to the zealots of both parties alike, a statement of doctrine which was silent on the mystery of the Trinity, or rather which seemed to imply that the Son, though miraculously conceived, was not co-equal or co-eternal with the Father, and which, by implication, appeared to suggest that, though the righteous would be endowed with immortality, the torments of the wicked would have an end, might well seem not to deserve the name of Christianity at all We need feel no wonder, then, that the appearance of Locke's work was followed by a bitter theological controversy which lasted during the rest of his life, and beyond it. Of these attacks upon him, and his *Vindications*, I have spoken in a previous chapter.

Whether Locke's presentation of Christianity is really more "reasonable" than the ancient and venerable creeds which it attempted to replace, is a question which might be debated now with fully as much vigour as in his own day. On the one hand, it might be maintained that a religion which has no mysteries, which has been pared down to the requirements of human reason, has ceased to be a religion altogether. That which is behind the veil can only be partially revealed in our present condition and to our present faculties. Now we know, and can know, only in part. On the other hand, it might be said that the "reason" is quite as much offended by the doctrines which Locke retained as by those he rejected. It is necessary, however, to recollect, in estimating his position, that the theological difficulties of his age were moral and metaphysical rather than scientific and critical. The moral consciousness of many reflecting men was shocked by doctrines like those of original sin, predestination, the atonement, and everlasting punishment. Nor could they reconcile to their reason the seeming contradictions of the doctrine of a Triune God. But the study of nature had not advanced sufficiently far, or been sufficiently widely spread, to make the idea of supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of affairs, such as is constantly presented to us in the Biblical history, any serious or general stumbling-block. Much less had the criticism of the Sacred Text, or the comparison of it with the sacred books of other religions, become sufficiently common, or been carried out with sufficient rigour, to disturb, to any great extent, the received opinion that the Bible was literally, or, at least, substantially, the Word of God. Hence the *via media* on which Locke took his stand, though it might have been impos-

sible to a philosopher of the next generation, seemed reasonable and natural enough to speculative men among his contemporaries. And for him it had at least this advantage, that it enabled him honestly to reconcile the conclusions of his philosophy with the singular piety and devoutness of his disposition. Had his religious doubts proceeded further than they did, there would probably have ensued a mental struggle which, besides causing him much personal unhappiness, might have deprived posterity of the more important of his works.

Of *The Letters on Toleration*, though deeply interesting to the generation in which they were written, a very brief account will here suffice. Their main thesis is, that the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate does not extend to the regulation of religious worship or to the controlling of religious beliefs, except so far as that worship or those beliefs may interfere with the ends of civil government. The respective provinces of a commonwealth and a church are strictly defined, and are shown to be perfectly distinct. "The boundaries on both sides are fixed and immovable. He jumbles heaven and earth together, the things most remote and opposite, who mixes these societies, which are in their original, end, business, and in everything, perfectly distinct and infinitely different from each other." But it may be asked, are there no speculative opinions, no tenets, actual or possible, of any religious community which should be restrained by the Civil Magistrate? The answer is, yes,—

"First, No opinions contrary to human society, or to those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society, are to be tolerated by the magistrate."

Secondly, after speaking of those who maintain such positions as that "faith is not to be kept with heretics," that "kings excommunicated forfeit their crowns and kingdoms," that "dominion is founded in grace," he proceeds:

"These, therefore, and the like, who attribute unto the faithful, religious, and orthodox, that is, in plain terms, unto themselves, any peculiar privilege or power above other mortals in civil concernments, or who, upon pretence of religion, do challenge any manner of authority over such as are not associated with them in their ecclesiastical communion: I say these have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate, as neither those that will not own and teach the duty of tolerating all men in matters of mere religion. For what do all these and the like doctrines signify, but that they may, and are ready upon any occasion to seize the government, and possess themselves of the estates and fortunes of their fellow-subjects, and that they only ask leave to be tolerated by the magistrates so long until they find themselves strong enough to effect it?"

"Thirdly, That church can have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate, which is constituted upon such a bottom that all those who enter upon it do thereby ipso facto deliver themselves up to the protection and service of another prince. For by this means the magistrate would give

way to the settling of a foreign jurisdiction in his own country, and suffer his own people to be listed, as it were, for soldiers against his own government."

"Lastly, Those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all."

The practical result of Locke's exceptions, at the time at which he wrote, would have been to exclude from toleration Roman Catholics, Atheists, and perhaps certain sects of Antinomians. Roman Catholics, however, would not have been excluded on the ground of their belief in Transubstantiation, as was actually the case, but because of those tenets which, in Locke's judgment, make them bad or impossible subjects.

Locke was not by any means the first of English writers who had advocated a wide toleration in religion. Bacon, in his remarkable *Essay on Unity in Religion*, had laid down, in passing, a position which is almost identical with what developed at length in the *Letters on Toleration.* During the Civil Wars, the Independents, as a body, had been led on by their theories of Church Government and of individual inspiration to maintain, on principle, and accord, in practice, a large measure of religious toleration. Amongst divines of the Church of England, Hales of Eton, Chillingworth, and Jeremy Taylor, had honourably distinguished themselves above the mass of their brethren by expressly advocating, or unmistakably suggesting, the same humane doctrines. The practical conclusions at which Taylor arrives, in his noble work on the *Liberty of Prophesying*, bear a close resemblance to those of Locke's *Letters on Toleration*, while the theoretical considerations on which he mainly founds them, namely, the difficulty of discovering religious truth, and the small number of theological propositions of which we can entertain anything like certainty, might be regarded as anticipating, to no small extent, some of the views expressed in the *Reasonableness of Christianity.* Locke's attention had been turned to these questions at an early period of his life by the religious dissensions which accompanied the Civil Wars, and during the years immediately preceding the publication of the first *Letter on Toleration*, his interest in them must have been sustained not only by the events which were then happening in England, but by the common topics of conversation amongst his Arminian or Remonstrant friends in Holland. The peculiarities of their position and the tendencies of their doctrines had, at an early date, forced on the Dutch Remonstrants, just as on the English Independents, the necessity of claiming and defending a wide toleration. What, perhaps, mainly distinguishes Locke's pamphlets is their thorough outspokenness, the political rather than the theological character of the argument, and the fact that they are expressly dedicated to the subjects of Toleration. instead of treating of it incidentally.

The sharp line of demarcation which Locke draws between the respective provinces of civil and religious communities seems to

lead logically to the inexpediency of maintaining a state establishment of religion. The independence which he claims for all religious societies would be inconsistent with the control which the State always has exercised, and always must exercise, in the affairs of any spiritual body on which it confers special privileges. This conclusion, we can hardly doubt, he would have readily accepted. As far back as 1669, he had objected to one of the articles in the "Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina," providing for the establishment and endowment of the Church of England in that colony. Even at the present day, men who adopt the most liberal and tolerant opinions on religious questions are divided as to the expediency or inexpediency of recognising a State-Church; but those who embrace the latter alternative may, perhaps, fairly claim Locke as having been on their side.

The system contained in the *Reasonableness of Christianity* had been constructed solely on an examination of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. In addition to the difficulties of interpretation attaching to the Epistles, Locke had urged that "they were writ to them who were in the faith and true Christians already, and so could not be designed to teach them the fundamental articles and points necessary to salvation." But to one who accepted the divine inspiration and infallibility of all parts of Scripture, it was essential to establish the consistency and coherence of the whole. Accordingly, in the later years of his life, Locke set himself the task of explaining the Epistles. This work seems to have been undertaken more for his own satisfaction and that of Lady Masham and his more immediate friends, than with any distinct design of publication. Nor did his commentaries see the light till after his death.

The commentatorial work accomplished by Locke consists of paraphrases and notes on the Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, and Ephesians, together with *An Essay for the understanding of St. Paul's Epistles by consulting St. Paul himself.*

It is needless to remark that these commentaries are distinguished by sound, clear sense, and by a manifest spirit of candour and fairness. They are often quoted with approbation by commentators of the last century. But in the present more advanced state of grammatical and historical criticism, they are likely to remain, as they now are, the least consulted of all his works.

The method, object, and drift of all Locke's theological writings is the same. Regardless of ecclesiastical tradition, but assuming the infallibility of the Scriptures, he attempts to arrive at the true and essential import of God's Revelation to man. His theoretical conclusion is that the articles of saving faith are few and simple, and the practical application of that conclusion is that, not only within the ample fold of Christianity, but even without it, all men, whose conduct is consistent with the maintenance of civil society, should be the objects of our good-will and charity.

CHAPTER X.

THE THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND THE CONDUCT OF THE UNDERSTANDING.

LOCKE'S tractate on Education, though some of the maxims are reiterated with needless prolixity, abounds in shrewdness and common-sense. Taking as the object of education the production of "a sound mind in a sound body," he begins with the "case," the "clay-cottage," and considers first the health of the body. Of the diet prescribed, dry bread and small beer form a large proportion. Locke is a great believer in the virtues of cold water. Coddling, in all its forms, was to be repressed with a strong hand. My young master was to be much in the open air, he was to play in the wind and the sun without a hat, his clothes were not to be too warm, and his bed was to be hard and made in different fashions, that he might not in after-life feel every little change, when there was no maid "to lay all things in print, and tuck him in warm."

In the cultivation of the mind, far more importance is attached to the formation of virtuous habits, and even of these social qualities which go by the name of "good breeding," than to the mere inculcation of knowledge. "I place Virtue as the first and most necessary of those endowments that belong to a Man or a Gentleman; as absolutely requisite to make him valued and beloved by others, acceptable or tolerable to himself." Wisdom, that is to say, "a man's managing his business ably, and with foresight, in this world," comes next in order. In the third place is Good Breeding, the breaches of which may be all avoided by "observing this one rule, Not to think meanly of ourselves, and not to think meanly of others." Learning, though "this may seem strange in the mouth of a bookish man," he puts last. "When I consider what ado is made about a little Latin and Greek, how many years are spent in it, and what a noise and business it makes to no purpose, I can hardly forbear thinking that the parents of children still live in fear of the Schoolmaster's Rod." "Seek out somebody that may know how discreetly to frame your child's manners: place him in hands where you may, as much as possible, secure his innocence, cherish and nurse up the good, and gently correct and weed out any bad inclinations, and settle in him good habits. This is the main point, and, this being provided for, Learning may be had into the bargain, and that, as I think" (a very common de-

lusion among the educational reformers of Locke's time), "at a very easy rate, by methods that may be thought on."

These being Locke's ideas as to the relative value of the objects to be aimed at in education, we need feel little surprise at the disfavour with which he viewed the system of the English Public Schools.

"Till you can find a School wherein it is possible for the Master to look after the manners of his scholars, and can show as great efforts of his care of forming their minds to virtue and their carriage to good breeding as of forming their tongues to the learned languages, you must confess that you have a strange value for words when, preferring the languages of the ancient Greeks and Romans to that which made 'em such brave men, you think it worth while to hazard your son's innocence and virtue for a little Greek and Latin. How any one's being put into a mixed herd of unruly boys, and there learning to wrangle at Trap or rook at Span-Farthing, fits him for civil conversation or business, I do not see. And what qualities are ordinarily to be got from such a troop of Play-fellows as Schools usually assemble together from parents of all kinds, that a father should so much covet, is hard to divine. I am sure he who is able to be at the charge of a Tutor at home may there give his son a more genteel carriage, more manly thoughts, and a sense of what is worthy and becoming, with a greater proficiency in Learning into the bargain, and ripen him up sooner into a man, than any School can do."

The battle of private and public education has been waged more or less fiercely ever since Locke's time, as it was waged long before, and, although it has now been generally decided in favour of the Schools, many of his arguments have even yet not lost their force.

Not only in the interest of morality, character, and manners did Locke disapprove the Public School system of his day. He also thought it essentially defective in its subjects and modes of instruction. The subjects taught were almost exclusively the Latin and Greek languages, though at Locke's own school of Westminster the upper forms were also initiated into Hebrew and Arabic. This linguistic training, though of course it included translations from the classical authors, was to a large extent carried on by means of verse-making, theme-making, repetition, and grammar lessons. Against all these modes of teaching Locke is peculiarly severe. Grammar, indeed, he would have taught, but not till the pupil is sufficiently conversant with the language to be able to speak it with tolerable fluency. Its proper place is as an introduction to Rhetoric. "I know not why any one should waste his time and beat his head about the Latin Grammar, who does not intend to be a critic, or make speeches and write despatches in it. . . . If his use of it be only to understand some books writ in it, without a critical knowledge of the tongue itself, reading alone will attain this end, without charging the mind with the multiplied rules and intricacies of Grammar." But without a knowledge of some rules of grammar, which need not, however, be taught in an abstract and separate form, but may be learnt gradually in the

course of reading, writing, and speaking, how would it be possible to attain to any precise understanding of the authors read? The fault of the old system, which even still lingers on in school instruction, consisted not so much in teaching grammatical rules, as in teaching them apart from the writings which exemplify them, and which alone can render them intelligible or interesting to a beginner.

The practice of filling up a large part of a boy's time with making Latin themes and verses meets with still more scathing censure than that of initiating him into the learned languages by means of abstract rules of grammar, and we may well imagine the cordial assent with which many of Locke's readers, smarting under a sense of the time they had in this way lost at school, would receive his criticisms.

"For do but consider what it is in making a Theme that a young lad is employed about; it is to make a speech on some Latin saying, as *Omnia vincit amor*, or *Non licet in bello bis peccare*, &c. And here the poor lad, who wants knowledge of those things he is to speak of, which is to be had only from time and observation, must set his invention on the rack to say something where he knows nothing; which is a sort of Egyptian tyranny to bid them make bricks who have not yet any of the materials. . . . In the next place consider the Language that their Themes are made in. 'Tis Latin, a language foreign in their country, and long since dead everywhere: a language which your son, 'tis a thousand to one, shall never have an occasion once to make a speech in as long as he lives after he comes to be a man; and a language wherein the manner of expressing one's self is so far different from ours that to be perfect in that would very little improve the purity and facility of his English style."

"If these may be any reasons against children's making Latin Themes at school, I have much more to say, and of more weight, against their making verses; verses of any sort. For if he has no genius to poetry, 'tis the most unreasonable thing in the world to torment a child and waste his time about that which can never succeed; and if he have a poetic vein, 'tis to me the strangest thing in the world that the father should desire or suffer it to be cherished or improved. Methinks the parents should labour to have it stifled and suppressed as much as may be; and I know not what reason a father can have to wish his son a poet, who does not desire to have him bid defiance to all other callings and business. Which is not yet the worst of the case; for if he proves a successful rhymer, and get once the reputation of a Wit, I desire it may be considered what company and places he is likely to spend his time in, nay, and estate too. For it is very seldom seen that any one discovers mines of gold or silver in Parnassus. 'Tis a pleasant air, but a barren soil; and there are very few instances of those who have added to their patrimony by anything they have reaped from thence. Poetry and Gaming, which usually go together, are alike in this too, that they seldom bring any advantage but to those who have nothing else to live on."

Repetition, as it is called, or "learning by heart great parcels of the authors which are taught," is unreservedly condemned as being of "no use at all, unless it be to baulk young lads in the was to learning languages, which, in my opinion, should be made as

easy and pleasant as may be." "Languages are to be learned only by reading and talking, and not by scraps of authors got by heart; which when a man's head is stuffed with, he has got the just furniture of a pedant, than which there is nothing less becoming a gentleman." This unqualified condemnation of the practice of committing to memory the choicer pieces of classical authors, whether in the ancient or modern languages, would hardly be adopted by the educational reformers of our own day. To tax the memory of a child or a boy with long strings of words, ill understood or not understood at all, is about as cruel and senseless a practice as can well be conceived. It is one of the strange devices, invented by perverse pedagogues and tolerated by ignorant parents, through which literature and all that is connected with books has been made so repulsive to many generations of young Englishmen. But if the tastes and interests of the pupil skilfully consulted, and the understanding is called into action as well as the memory, a store of well-selected passages learnt by rote will not only do much to familiarize him with the genius of the language, but will also supply constant solace and occupation in those moments of depression and vacuity which are only too sure to occur in every man's life.

Locke, like Milton (see Milton's Pamphlet on Education addressed to Master Samuel Hartlib, and cp. Pattison's *Life of Milton*, published in this series, pp. 42-46), had embraced the new gospel of education according to Comenius, and supposed that, by new methods, not only might the road to knowledge be rendered very short and easy, but almost all the subjects worth learning might be taught in the few years spent at School and College. The whole of Milton's "complete and generous education" was to be "done between twelve and one-and-twenty." And similarly Locke thinks that "at the same time that a child is learning French and Latin, he may also be entered in Arithmetic, Geography, Chronology, History, and Geometry too. For if these be taught him in French or Latin, when he begins once to understand either of these tongues, he will get a knowledge in these sciences and the language to boot." To these subjects are afterwards added Astronomy, Ethics, Civil and Common Law, Natural Philosophy, and almost all the then known branches of human knowledge, though, curiously enough, Greek is omitted as not being, like Latin and French, essential to the education of a gentleman, and being, moreover, easy of acquisition, "if he has a mind to carry his studies farther," is after-life. Concurrently with these intellectual pursuits, the model young gentleman is to graduate in dancing, fencing, wrestling, riding, besides (and on this addition to his accomplishment the utmost stress is laid) "learning a trade, a manual trade, nay, two or three, but one more particularly." And all this programme apparently was to be filled up before the age of one-and-twenty, for at that time Locke assumes that, notwithstahding all reason and remonstrances to the contrary, my young master's parents will insist on marrying him, and "the young gentleman being got within view of matrimony, 'tis time to leave him to his mistress."

This idea of an education embracing the whole field of human knowledge and accomplishments is a vision so attractive, that it would be strange indeed if it did not from time to time present itself to the enthusiast and the reformer. But wherever the experiment has been tried on boys and youths of average ability, the vision has invariably been dissipated. And, as the circle of human knowledge is constantly widening, whereas the capacity to learn remains much the same from generation to generation, the failure is inevitable.

Any account of Locke's views on Education, however meagre, would be very imperfect, if it neglected to notice the motives to obedience and proficiency which he proposed to substitute for what was then too often the one and only motive on which the Schoolmaster relied, fear of the rod. Corporal chastisement should be reserved, he thought, for the offence of wilful and obstinate disobedience. In all other cases, appeal should be made to the pupil's natural desire of employment and knowledge, to example acting through his propensity to imitation, to reasoning, to the sense of shame and the love of commendation and reputation. Many of Locke's suggestions for bringing these motives effectually to bear are very ingenious, and the whole of this part of the discussion is as creditable to his humanity as to his knowledge of human nature.

There is a large literature on the theory of education, from the Book of Proverbs and the *Republic* of Plato downwards. It is no part of my task even to mention the principal writers in this field. But, besides some of the works of Comenius, the Essay of Montaigne *De l'institution des infants*, and the tractate of Milton already referred to, we may almost take for granted that Locke had read the *Schoolmaster* of Roger Ascham. This author, who was instructor to Queen Elizabeth, is already sufficiently independent of scholastic traditions to think that "children are sooner allured by love, than driven by beating, to attain good learning," and to suggest that "there is no such whetstone to sharpen a good wit, and encourage a will to learning, as is praise." He protests almost as strongly as Locke againt the senseless mode, then and long afterwards prevalent, of teaching grammar merely by means of abstract rules. and proposes, as in part substitute, the method of double translation, that is, of translating from the foreign or dead language into English, and then back again. Of the many works on education subsequent to Locke's, the most famous is, undoubtedly, the *Emile* of Rousseau. On Rousseau's theories there can be no question that Locke, mediately or immediately, exercised considerable influence, though the range of speculation covered in the *Emile* far exceeds that of the *Thoughts concerning Education.* Of the points common to the two writers, I may specify the extension of the term "education" to the regulations of the nursery, the substitution of an appeal to the tender and the social affections for the harsh discipline mostly in vogue among our ancestors, the stress laid on the importance of example and habituation in place of the mere inculcation of rules, and, as a point of detail, the de-

sirableness of learning one or more manual trades. One circumstance, however, as Mr. Morley has pointed out, distinguishes the *Emile* from all the works on education which preceded it. Its scope is not confined to the children of well-to-do people, and hence its object is to produce, not the scholar and the gentleman, but the man. The democratic extension thus given to educational theories has since borne fruit in many schemes designed for general applicability, or, specifically, for the education of the poor, such as those of Basedow, Pestalozzi, and, among our own countrymen, Dr. Bell.

In connexion with the *Thoughts on Education*, it may be convenient to notice the short treatise on the *Conduct of the Understanding*. It is true that it was designed as an additional chapter to the *Essay*, but the main theme of which it treats is connected rather with the work of self-education than with the analysis of knowledge, or the classification of the faculties. This admirable little volume, which may be read through in three or four hours, appears to have been intended by Locke as at least a partial substitute for the ordinary logic. As in matters of conduct, so in the things of the intellect, he thought little of rules. It was only by practice and habituation that men could become either virtuous or wise. But, though it is perfectly true that rules are of little use without practice, it is not easy to see how habit can be successfully initiated or fostered without the assistance of rules; and inadequate as were the rules of the old scholastic logic to remedy the "natural defects in the understanding," they required rather to be supplemented than replaced. The views of Bacon on this subject, much as they have been misunderstood, are juster than those of Locke.

Right reasoning, Locke thought (and this is nearly the whole truth, though not altogether so), is to be gained from studying good models of it. In the *Thoughts on Education*, he says, "If you would have your son reason well, let him read Chillingworth." In this treatise, with the same view he commends the study of Mathematics, "Not that I think it necessary that all men should be deep mathematicians, but that, having got the way of reasoning which that study necessarily brings the mind to, they might be able to transfer it to other parts of knowledge, as they shall have occasion." The great difference to be observed in demonstrative and in probable reasoning is that, in the former, one train of reasoning, "bringing the mind to the source on which it bottoms," is sufficient, whereas "in probabilities it is not enough to trace one argument to its source, and observe its strength and weakness, but all the arguments, after having been so examined on both sides, must be laid in balance one against another, and, upon the whole, the understanding determine its assent."

The great defect of this tractate (but its brevity makes the defect of less importance) is its singular want of method. In fact, it appears never to have undergone revision. The author seems to throw together his remarks and precepts without any attempt at order, and he never misses any opportunity of repeating his attacks

on what he evidently regarded as being, in his own time, the main hindrances to the acquisition of a sound understanding—prejudice and pedantry. But in justness of observation, incisiveness of language, and profound acquaintance with the workings of the human mind, there are many passages which will bear comparison with anything he has written. Specially worthy of notice is the homely and forcible character of many of his expressions, as when he speaks of a "large, sound, roundabout sense," of "men without any industry or acquisition of their own, inheriting local truths," of great readers "making their understanding only the warehouse of other men's lumber," of the ruling passion entering the mind, like "the sheriff of the place, with all the posse, as if it had a legal right to be alone considered there."

Except for the inveterate and growing custom of confining works employed in education to such as can be easily lectured on and easily examined in, it is difficult to understand why this "student's guide," so brief, and abounding in such valuable cautions and suggestions, should have so nearly fallen into desuetude."

CHAPTER XI.

WORKS ON GOVERNMENT, TRADE, AND FINANCE.

LOCKE's two *Treatises of Government* (published in 1690) carry us back into the region of worn-out controversies. The troublous times which intervened between the outbreak of the Civil War and the Revolution of 1688, including some years on either side, naturally called forth a large amount of controversy and controversial literature on the rights of kings and subjects, on the origin of government, on the point at which, if any, rebellion is justifiable, and other kindred topics. Not only did the press teem with pamphlets on these subjects, but, for three-quarters of a century, they were constantly being discussed and re-discussed with a dreary monotony in Parliament, in the pulpits, in the courts of law, and in the intercourse of private society. It is no part of my plan to give any account of these disputes, except so far as they bear immediately on the publication of Locke's treatises. It is enough, therefore, to state that the despotic and absolutist side in the controversy had been, or was supposed to have been, considerably re-inforced by the appearance in 1680 of a posthumous work, which had been circulated only in manuscript during its author's lifetime, entitled *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings*, by Sir Robert Filmer. This curious book (a more correct edition of which was published by Edmund Bohun in 1685) grounds the rights of kings on the patriarchal authority of Adam and his successors. Adam had received directly from God (such was the theory) absolute dominion over Eve and all his children and their posterity, to the most remote generations. This dominion, which rested on two independent grounds, paternity and right of property, was transmitted by Adam to his heirs, and is at once the justification of the various sovereignties now exercised by kings over their subjects, and a reason against any limitation of their authority or any questioning of their titles. By what ingenious contrivance the two links of the chain—Adam and the several monarchs now actually reigning on the earth—are brought together, those curious in such speculations may find by duly consulting the pages of Sir Robert Filmer's work.

Such a tissue of contradictions, assumptions, and absurdities as is presented by this book (which, however, contains one grain of truth, namely, that all political power has, historically, its ultimate

origin in the dominion exercised by the head of the family or tribe) might have been left, one would think, without any serious answer. But we must recollect that at that time theological arguments were introduced into all the provinces of thought, and that any reason, which by any supposition could be connected with the authority of Scripture, was certain to exercise considerable influence over a vast number of minds. Any way, the book was celebrated and influential enough to merit, in Locke's judgment, a detailed answer. This answer was given in due form, step by step, in the former of Locke's two *Treatises*, which appears to have been written between 1680 and 1685, as the Edition of the *Patriarcha* quoted is invariably that of 1680. I do not propose to follow him through his various arguments and criticisms, many of which, as will readily be supposed, are acute and sagacious enough. Most modern readers will be of opinion that one of his questions might alone have sufficed to spare him any further concern, namely, Where is Adam's heir now to be found? If he could be shown, and his title indubitably proved, the subsequent question of his rights and prerogatives might then, perhaps, be profitably discussed.

Of incomparably more importance and interest than the former treatise is the latter, in which Locke sets forth his own theory concerning "the true original, extent, and end of Civil Government." Mr. Fox-Bourne is probably correct in referring the date of the composition of this treatise to the time immediately preceding and concurrent with the English Revolution, that is to say, to the closing period of Locke's stay in Holland. The word, especially in the later chapters, bears the marks of passion, as if written in the midst of a great political struggle, and, in the Preface to the two *Treatises*, it is distinctly stated to be the author's object "to establish the throne of our great restorer, our present King William, and to justify to the world the people of England, whose love of their just and natural rights saved the nation when it was on the very brink of slavery and ruin."

The theories advanced by Locke on the origin and nature of civil society have much in common with those of Puffendorf and Hooker, the latter of whom is constantly quoted in the foot-notes. After some preliminary speculations on the "state of nature," he determines that Political Society originates solely in the individual consents of those who constitute it. This consent, however, may be signified either expressly or tacitly, and the tacit consent "reaches as far as the very being of any one within the territories of that government."

Though no man need enter a political society against his will, yet when, by consent given either expressly or tacitly, he has entered it, he must submit to the form of government established by the majority. There is, however, one form of government which it is not competent even to the majority to establish, and that is Absolute Monarchy, this being "inconsistent with civil society, and so being no form of government at all." Locke ridicules the idea that men would ever voluntarily have erected over themselves such an au-

thority, "as if, when men quitting the state of nature entered into society, they agreed that all of them but one should be under the restraint of laws, but that he should still retain all the liberty of the state of nature, increased with power and made licentious by impunity. This is to think that men are so foolish, that they take care to avoid what mischiefs may be done them by pole-cats or foxes, but are content, nay, think it safety, to be devoured by lions." In these and some of the following strictures, he seems to have in view not only the ruder theories of Filmer and the absolutist divines, but also the more philosophical system of Hobbes.

But, supposing a government other than an Absolute Monarchy to have been established, are there any acts or omissions by which it can forfeit the allegiance of its subjects? To answer this question, we must look to the ends of political society and government. Now the great and chief end which men propose to themselves, when they unite into commonwealths, is "the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates, which I call by the general name, property." A government, therefore, which neglects to secure this end, and still more a government which itself invades the rights of its subjects, is guilty of a breach of trust, and consequently may be lawfully set aside, whenever an opportunity occurs. Hence the community itself must always be regarded as the supreme authority, in abeyance, indeed, while its fiduciary properly and faithfully executes the powers entrusted to him, but ever ready to intervene when he misuses or betrays the trust reposed in him.

On such a theory, it may be objected, of the relations of the people to the government, what is to prevent incessant disturbance and repeated revolutions? Locke relies on the inertia of mankind. Moreover, as he says, with considerable truth, in a previous passage-whatever theories may be propounded, or whatever traditions may have been handed down, as the origin, nature, and extent of government, a people, which knows itself to be rendered miserable by the faults of its rulers and which sees any chance of bettering its conditions, will not be deterred from attempting to throw off a yoke which has become intolerable. "When the people are made miserable, and find themselves exposed to the ill-usage of arbitrary power, cry up their governors, as much as you will, for sons of Jupitor; let them be sacred and divine, descended or authorized from heaven; give them out for whom or what you please, the same will happen. The people generally ill-treated, and contrary to right, will be ready upon any occasion to ease themselves of a burden that sits heavy upon them."

But, though there is much truth in this last remark, there can be little question that absolutist theories of government, especially when clothed with a religious sanction which appeals to the beliefs of the people at large, have much influence in protecting the person of an absolute ruler, as well as in ensuring the execution of his orders; while, on the other hand, theories like those of Locke have a tendency to encourage criticism, and to weaken many of the motives which have usually prevented men from offering resistance

to the established government. The practical consequences of Locke's theories, as reproduced and improved on by later writers, would probably be found, if we could trace them, to be represented, in no inconsiderable degree, in the French and American revolutions which occurred about a century after the publication of the Treatises. Nor have his speculations been without their share, probably, in determining much of the political history and still more of the political sentiment of our own country. To maintain that kings have a divine right to misgovern their subjects, or to deny that the people are, in the last resort, the supreme arbiters of the fate of their rulers, are paradoxes which, to Englishmen of our generation, would appear not so much dangerous as foolish. This altered state of sentiment, and the good fruit it has borne in the improved relations between the Legislature and the People, the Crown and the Parliament, may, without undue partiality, be ascribed, at least in some measure, to the generous spirit of liberty which warms our author's pages, and to the Whig tradition which so long cherished his doctrines, till at last they became the common heritage of the English people.

Admirable, however, as, in most respects, are the parts of Locke's treatise which discuss the present relations of governors and governed, his conception of the remote origin of political society is radically false. "The first framers of the government," "the original frame of the government" (ch. xiii.), have never had any existence except in the minds of jurists and publicists. In the primitive stages of human development, governments, like languages, are not made; they grow. The observation of primitive communities still existing, combined with the more intelligent study of ancient history, has led recent writers to adopt a wholly different view of the *origin* of government (the question of the respective *rights* of governors and governed is not affected) from that which prevailed in the times of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. The family or the tribe (according to different theories) is the original unit of society. Government, therefore, of some kind or other always have existed, and the "state of nature" is a mere fiction. In course or time, the family or the tribe, by a natural process of development, would, in many cases, become greatly enlarged, or combine with other units like itself. Out of this growth or aggregation would arise, in most cases gradually and insensibly, the nation or state as known to later history. The constitution, the "frame of government," has generally passed through stages similar to those passed through by the state or nation. A body of custom must gradually have grown up even in the most primitive societies. The "customs" would be interpreted and so administered by the house-father or head of the tribe. But, as the family or tribe changed its abode, or had to carry on its existence under different circumstances, or became enlarged, or combined with other families or tribes, the customs would necessarily be modified, often insensibly and unconsciously. Moreover, the house-father or head of the tribe might be compelled or might find it expedient to act in concert with others, either as equals or

subordinates, in interpreting the customs, in taking measures of defence, in directing military operations, or in providing for the various exigencies of the common life. Here there is no formal assent of the governed to the acts of the governors, in our sense of those terms, though, undoubtedly, the whole family or tribe, or its stronger members, might on rare occasions substitute one head for another; no passage from the "state of nature" to political society; no definitely constituted "frame of government." At a further stage, no doubt, political constitutions were discussed and framed, but this stage was long posterior to the period in the progress of society at which men are supposed to have quitted the state of nature, selected their form of government, and entered into an express contract with one another to obey and maintain it. The fault of Locke, like that of the other political speculators of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, consisted in assuming that primitive man was impelled by the same motives, and acted in the same manner and with the same deliberate design, as the men of his own generation. As in morals and psychology, so in politics, the historical and comparative methods, so familiar to recent investigators, were as yet hardly known.

I ought not to dismiss this book without noticing Locke's remarks on the necessity of Parliamentary Reform. "To what gross absurdities the following custom, when reason has left it, may lead, we may be satisfied when we see the bare name of a town, of which there remains not so much as the ruins, where scarce so much housing as a sheepcote or more inhabitants than a shepherd is to be found, sends as many representatives to the grand assembly of law-makers as a whole county numerous in people and powerful in riches."

The writings of Locke on Trade and Finance are chiefly interesting to us on account of the place which they occupy in the History of Political Economy. They consist of three tracts, the occasions and consequences of which have already been described. The main positions which he endeavours to establish are three. First, interest, or the price of the hire of money, cannot, ordinarily speaking, be regulated by law, and, if it could so be regulated, its reduction below the natural or market rate would be injurious to the interests of the public. Secondly, as silver and gold are commodities not differing intrinsically in their nature from other commodities, it is impossible by arbitrary acts of the Government to raise the value of silver and gold coins. You may, indeed, enjoin by Act of Parliament that sixpence shall henceforth be called a shilling, but, all the same, it will only continue to purchase sixpennyworth of goods. You will soon find that the new shilling is only as effective in the market as the old sixpence, and hence, if the Government has taken the difference, it has simply robbed its subjects to that amount. The third position, which he only maintains incidentally in discussing the other two, is that the commercial prosperity of the country is to be measured by the excess of its exports over its imports, or, as the phrase then went, by the balance of

trade. The two former of these propositions are simple, but long-disputed, economical truths. The latter is an obstinate and specious economical fallacy.

To understand Locke's contention on the first point, it must be borne in mind that in his time, and down even to the middle of the present reign, the maximum rate of interest allowable in all ordinary transactions was fixed by law. By the statute 12 Car. II. (passed in 1660) it had been reduced from eight to six per cent. Sir Josiah Child, whose *Observations concerning Trade* had been reprinted in 1690, and who probably represented a very large amount of mercantile opinion, advocated its further reduction to four per cent. He maintained, quoting the example of Holland, that low interest is the cause of national wealth, and that, consequently, to lower the legal rate of interest would be to take a speedy and simple method of making the country richer. Against this proposal Locke argued that the example of Holland was entirely beside the question; that the low rate of interest in that country was owing to the abundance of ready money which it had formerly enjoyed, and not to any legal restrictions; nay, in the States there was no law limiting the rate of interest at all, every one being free to hire out his money for anything he could get for it, and the courts enforcing the bargain. But, further, suppose the proposed law to be enacted: what would be the consequences? It would be certain to be evaded, while, at the same time, it would hamper trade, by increasing the difficulty of borrowing and lending. Rather than lend at a low rate of interest, many men would hoard, and, consequently, much of the money which would otherwise find its way into trade would be intercepted, and the commerce of the country be proportionately lessened. Excellent as most of these arguments are, Locke unfortunately stopped short of the legitimate conclusion to be drawn from them. He did not propose, as he should have done, to sweep away the usury laws altogether, but simply to maintain the existing law fixing the maximum of interest at six per cent. Sir Dudley North, in his admirable pamphlet *Discourses on Trade*, published in 1691, just before the publication of the *Considerations*, but too late, perhaps, to have been seen by Locke, takes a much more consistent view as to the expediency of legal restrictions on the rate of interest. "As touching interest of money, he is clear that it should be left freely to the market, and not be restrained by law." Notwithstanding the opposition of men like North and Locke, to whom may be added an earlier writer Sir William Petty, the arguments of Child partially triumphed in the next reign. By the 12th of Anne, the legal rate of interest was reduced to five per cent., and so continued till the Act of 1854, repealing, with regard to all future transactions, the existing Usury Laws. There can be little doubt that public opinion had been prepared for this measure mainly through the publication of Bentham's powerful *Defence of Usury*, the telling arguments of which had gradually impressed themselves on the minds of statesmen and economists. Adam Smith, on the other hand, had stopped just

where Locke did. "The legal rate of interest, though it ought to be somewhat above, ought not be much above the lowest market rate." That the rate of interest, whatever it may be, should be fixed by law, he appears to take for granted. Indeed, he seems to write more confidently on this point than Locke had done, and, in this particular at least, he appears to be of opinion that the legislator can look after the private interests of individuals better than they can look after their own. Happily, as Bentham points out, the refutation of this paradox was to be found in the general drift and spirit of his work.

On the second question, "raising the value of money," Locke's views are much clearer and more consistent than on the first. It would be impossible to state more explicitly than he has done the sound economical dictum that gold and silver are simply commodities, not differing essentially from other commodities; and that the government stamp upon them, whereby they become coin, cannot materially raise their value. As most of my readers are aware, it has been a favourite device, time out of mind, of unprincipled and impecunious governments to raise the denomination of the coin, or to put a smaller quantity of the precious metals in coins retaining the old denomination, with a view of recruiting an impoverished exchequer. There have, doubtless, been financiers unintelligent enough to suppose that this expedient might enrich the government, while it did no harm to the people. But it requires only a small amount of reflection to see that all creditors are defrauded exactly in the same proportion as that in which the coin is debased. One lucid passage from Locke's answer to Lowndes may suffice to show the forcible manner in which he presents this truth:

"Raising of coin is but a specious word to deceive the unwary. It only gives the usual denomination of a greater quantity of silver to a less (*v. g.*, calling four grains of silver a penny to-day, when five grains of silver made a penny yesterday), but adds no worth or real value to the silver coin, to make amends for its want of silver. That is impossible to be done. For it is only the quantity of silver in it that is, and eternally will be, the measure of its value. One may as rationally hope to lengthen a foot, by dividing it into fifteen parts instead of twelve and calling them inches, as to increase the value of silver that is in a shilling, by dividing it into fifteen parts instead of twelve and calling them pence. This is all that is done when a shilling is raised from twelve to fifteen pence."

Lowndes had maintained that "raising the coin," in addition to making up the loss caused by calling in the clipped money, and other advantages, would increase the circulating medium of the country, and so put a stop to the multiplication of hazardous paper-credit and the inconveniences of bartering. Nothing could be better than Locke's reply:

"Just as the boy cut his leather into five quarters (as he called them)

to cover his ball, when cut into four quarters it fell short, but, after all his pains, as much of his ball lay bare as before; if the quantity of coined silver employed in England fall short, the arbitrary denomination of a greater number of pence given to it, or, which is all one, to the several coined pieces of it, will not make it commensurate to the size of our trade or the greatness of our occasions. This is as certain as that, if the quantity of a board which is to stop a leak of a ship fifteen inches square, be but twelve inches square, it will not be made to do it by being measured by a foot that is divided into fifteen inches, instead of twelve, and so having a larger tale or number of inches in denomination given to it."

The general principle that to depreciate the coinage is to rob the creditor, and that, though you may change the name, you cannot change the thing, was quite as emphatically stated by Petty and North as by Locke. But the value of Locke's tracts consisted in their amplitude of argument and illustration, which left to the unprejudiced reader no alternative but to accept their conclusion. As he himself said in a letter to Molyneux, "Lay by the arbitrary names of pence and shillings, and consider and speak of it as grains and ounces of silver, and 'tis as easy as telling of twenty."

Locke had the penetration to see that the laws existing in his time against the exportation of gold and silver coin must necessarily be futile, and, while it was permitted to export bullion, could answer no conceivable purpose. These laws, which date from the time of Edward the Third, were, curiously enough, not repealed till the year 1819, though as early as the time of the Restoration they had been pronounced by so competent a judge as Sir William Petty to be "nugatory" and "impracticable." Nothing, as Locke says towards the conclusion of his answer to Lowndes, could prevent the exportation of silver and gold in payment of debts contracted beyond the seas, and it could "be no odds to England whether it was carried out in specie or when melted down into bullion." But the principle on which the prohibition of exporting gold and silver coin ultimately rested seems to have been accepted by him as unhesitatingly as it was by almost all the other economists of the time. That principle was that the wealth of a nation is to be measured by the amount of gold and silver in its possession, this amount depending on the ratio of the value of the exports to that of the imports. When the value of the exports exceeded that of the imports, the Balance of Trade, as it was called, was said to be in favour of a country; when, on the other hand, the value of the imports exceeded that of the exports, the Balance of Trade was said to be against it. A favourable balance, it was assumed, must necessarily increase the amount of gold and silver in the country, while an unfavourable balance must necessarily diminish it. And, lastly, the amount of gold and silver in its possession was the measure of a nation's wealth. These views form part of what political economists call the Mercantile Theory, which it was the peculiar glory of Adam Smith to demolish.

It is somewhat humiliating to the biographer of Locke to be

obliged to confess that, in this respect, his theories on trade lag considerably behind those of an almost contemporary writer, Sir Dudley North, whose work has already been mentioned. Some of North's maxims are worthy of Adam Smith, and one wonders that, when once enunciated, they found so little currency, and were so completely ignored in both the literature and the legislation of the time. Here are a few, but the whole tract may be read in less than an hour: "The whole world, as to trade, is but as one nation or people, and therein nations are as persons." "The loss of a trade with one nation is not that only, separately considered, but so much of the trade of the world rescinded and lost, for all is combined together." "No laws can set prices in trade, the rates of which must and will make themselves; but, when such laws do happen to lay any hold, it is so much impediment to trade, and therefore prejudicial." "No man is richer for having his estate all in money, plate, &c., lying by him, but, on the contrary, he is for that reason the poorer. That man is richest whose estate is in a growing condition, either in land at farm, money at interest, or goods in trade." "Money exported in trade is an increase to the wealth of the nation; but spent in war and payments abroad, is so much impoverishment." "We may labour to hedge in the Cuckoo, but in vain; for no people ever yet grew rich by policies, but it is peace, industry, and freedom that brings trade and wealth, and nothing else."

Some of Locke's opinions on trade and finance were undoubtedly erroneous, and it must be confessed that the little tract of Sir Dudley North supplies a better summary of sound economical doctrine than any which we can find in his writings; but then this brochure is merely a summary, with little of argument or elucidation, and perhaps it would be difficult to point to any previous or contemporary writer whose works are, on the whole, more important in the history of economical science than those of Locke."

CHAPTER XII.

LOCKE'S INFLUENCE ON THOUGHT.

To trace Locke's influence on subsequent speculation would be to write the History of Philosophy from his time to our own. In England, France, and Germany there have been few writers on strictly philosophical questions in this century or the last who have not either quoted Locke's *Essay* with approbation, or at least paid him the homage of stating their grounds for dissenting from it. In the last century, his other works, especially those on Government and Toleration, may be said to have almost formed the recognized code of liberal opinion in this country, besides exercising a considerable influence on the rapidly developing speculations which, in the middle of the century, were preparing an intellectual no less than a social revolution in France. I can here only speak of the nature of Locke's influence, and of the directions it took, in the very broadest outline, and it is the less necessary that I should enter into detail, as I have frequently adverted to it in the preceding chapters.

In England, the *Essay*, though from the first it had its ardent admirers, seemed, for some years after its appearance, to have produced its effect on English philosophical literature mainly by antagonism. Many were the critics who attacked the "new way of ideas," and attempted to show the evil consequences to morals, religion, and exact thought which must follow from the acceptance of Locke's speculations. Here and there he was defended, but the attack certainly largely outnumbered the defence. Of these controversies I have already given some account in the chapters on Locke's Life, and need not, therefore, now recur to them. The first English writer on philosophy of the highest rank who succeeded Locke was Berkeley, and on him the influence of his predecessor is so distinctly apparent, that it may well be questioned whether Berkeley would ever have written the *Principles* and the *Dialogues*, if Locke had not written the *Essay*. Locke had regarded not "things" but "ideas" as the immediate objects of the mind in thinking, though he had supposed these ideas to be representative of things; but why, argued Berkeley, suppose "things" to exist, if "ideas" are the only objects which we perceive? Again, Locke had analyzed the idea of Matter conceived as "Substance" into "we know not what" support of known qual-

ities. How, then, said Berkeley, do we know that it exists? The idealist philosophy of Berkeley may thus be viewed as a development, on one side, of the philosophy of Locke. But Hume, by carrying Berkeley's scepticism further than he had done himself, and by questioning the reality of Substance, as applied either to matter or mind, may be said to have developed Locke's principles in a direction which was practically the very reverse of that taken by Berkeley. For the result of Berkeley's denial of "matter" was to enhance the importance of "mind," and to re-assure men as to the existence of one all-embracing mind in the person of the Deity. But the result of the questions which Hume raised as to the substantial existence of either Matter or Mind was to leave men in a state of pure scepticism, or, as we should now perhaps call it, Agnosticism. On the other applications of Hume's method, I need not detain the reader. To the ordinary common-sense Englishman, who approached philosophical questions with interest but without any special metaphysical aptitude, the systems both of Hume and Berkeley appeared to be open to the fatal objection of paradox, and hence, throughout the eighteenth century, Locke continued, in ordinary estimation, to hold the supreme place among English philosophers. Horace Walpole (writing in 1789) probably expresses the average opinion of the English reading public of his time, when he says that Locke (with whom he couples Bacon) was almost the first philosopher who introduced common-sense into his writings. Nor was it only that he was supreme in popular estimation. His influence is apparent in almost every philosophical and quasi-philosophical work of the period. It may specially be mentioned that the doctrine of Innate Ideas went out of fashion, both word and thing, and, when a similar doctrine came into vogue at the end of the century, under the authority of Reid and Stewart, it was in a modified form and under a new appellation, that of primary or fundamental beliefs. These authors always spoke with the greatest respect of Locke, and Stewart especially was always anxious to establish, when possible, an identity of opinion between himself and his illustrious predecessor. And even in recent times, when the topics and conditions of philosophical speculation have undergone so much change, there are few philosophical authors of eminence who do not make frequent reference to Locke's *Essay*. It is now perhaps seldom read through except by professed students of philosophy, but it is still probably oftener "dipped into" than any other philosophical treatise in the language.

In France, the *Essay* at first made little way. It took more than twenty years to sell off the first edition of the French translation, but from 1723 to 1758 editions followed one another in rapid succession at intervals of about six years. Voltaire says that no man had been less read or more abused in France than Locke. The points in his philosophy which seem to have been specially selected for attack were the statements that God might, if he pleased, annex thought to matter, and that the natural reason could not alone assure us of the immortality of the soul. The qualifications, as the

custom is, were dropped out of these statements, and it was roundly asserted that Locke maintained the soul to be material and mortal. Voltaire does not fail to point out the hastiness and injustice of these conclusions, and is himself unbounded in his admiration for the English philosopher. Malebranche, he says, is read on account of the agreeableness of his style, Descartes on account of the hardihood of his speculations ; Locke is not read, because he is merely wise. There never was a thinker more wise, more methodical, more logical than Locke. Other reasoners had written a romance of the soul ; Locke came and modestly wrote its history, developing the ideas of the human understanding as an accomplished anatomist explains the forces of the human body. Voltaire lived to see the philosophy of Locke, or rather an extreme phase of it, become almost the established creed of those who cared at all for speculative questions in France. Condillac in his early work, the *Essai sur l'Origine des Connoissances Humaines* (first published in 1746), simply adopts Locke's account of the origin of knowledge, finding it in the two sources of Sensation and Reflection. But in his later work, the *Traité des Sensations*, which appeared in 1754, he has gone far beyond his master, and not only finds the origin of all knowledge in sensation alone, but of all our faculties as well. It is in this work that the metaphor of the gradually animated statue occurs. Condillac's system soon became the fashionable philosophy of his countrymen, and both friends and foes credited Locke with its parentage. With Joseph de Maistre, who may be regarded as the bitterest exponent of French Ultramontanism, Locke is the immediate link through whom Helvétius, Cabanis, and the other enemies of the human race in France had derived from Bacon the principles which had been so destructive to their country and mankind. But it was not the followers of Condillac only who professed to base their systems on the principles of Locke. Degerando, writing in 1813, says, "All the French philosophers of his age glory in ranging themselves among the disciples of Locke, and admitting his principles." The great names of Turgot, Diderot, D'Alembert, Condorcet, and Destutt de Tracy alike appear in the roll of his professed disciples. And even when the reaction against the authority of Locke began in France, his influence might still be traced in authors like Maine de Biran, Royer Collard, Cousin, and Jouffroy, however emphatically they might repudiate his system as a whole. Lastly, Auguste Comte may be connected with Locke through Hume.

Except by way of reaction and opposition, Locke's influence has been felt much less in Germany than in either England or France. The earliest opponent of his philosophy, who himself held any high rank as a philosopher, was Leibnitz, who, in his *Nouveaux Essais* (written in 1704, but not published till 1765), attacked not only Locke's specific conclusions, but his method of commencing his study of philosophy with an examination of the human mind. Yet he recognises the *Essay* as "one of the most beautiful and most esteemed works of this time." It may be remarked as curious

that he is disposed to rate the *Thoughts on Education* even still higher than the *Essay*. But, when we think of Locke's relation to German philosophy, it is mainly in connection with the antagonism of Kant. For, though Kant states that he was "awoke from his dogmatic slumber" by reading Hume, it is plain, throughout the *Kritik*, that he has in his mind the system of Locke at least as much as that of his sceptical successor. And yet these two great philosophers, the reformer of English and the reformer of German philosophy, have much in common, specially their mode of approaching the problems of ontology and theology, which have vexed so many generations of thinkers, by first inquiring into the limits, capacities, and procedure of the human mind.

Of the specific influence of Locke's treatises on Government, Religion, Toleration, Education, and Finance I have already said something in previous chapters. In each one of these subjects the publication of his views forms a point of departure, and no writer on the history of any one of them could dispense with a lengthened notice of his theories.

But far more important than their specific influence on other writers, or even on the development of the subjects with which they deal, has been the effect of Locke's writings on the history of progress and civilization. In an age of excitement and prejudice, he set men the example of thinking calmly and clearly. When philosophy was almost synonymous with the arid discussion of scholastic subtleties, he wrote so as to interest statesmen and men of the world. At a time when the chains of dogma were far tighter, and the penalties of attempting to loosen them far more stringent, than it is now easy to conceive, he raised questions which stirred the very depths of human thought. And all this he did in a spirit so candid, so tolerant, so liberal, and so unselfish, that he seemed to be writing not for his own party or his own times, but for the future of knowledge and of mankind. To sound every question to the bottom, never to allow our convictions to outstrip our evidence, to throw aside all prejudices and all interests in the pursuit of truth, but to hold the truth, when found, in all charity and with all consideration towards those who have been less fortunate than we—these are the lessons which, faithfully transmitted through two centuries by those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, he has bequeathed to us and our poste

DANIEL DEFOE

BY

WILLIAM MINTO

PREFACE.

THERE are three considerable biographies of Defoe—the first by George Chalmers, published in 1786; the second by Walter Wilson, published in 1830; the third, by William Lee, published in 1869. All three are thorough and painstaking works, justified by independent research and discovery. The labour of research in the case of an author supposed to have written some two hundred and fifty separate books and pamphlets, very few of them under his own name, is naturally enormous; and when it is done, the results are open to endless dispute. Probably two men could not be found who would read through the vast mass of contemporary anonymous and pseudonymous print, and agree upon a complete list of Defoe's writings. Fortunately, however, for those who wish to get a clear idea of his life and character, the identification is not pure guesswork on internal evidence. He put his own name or initials to some of his productions, and treated the authorship of others as open secrets. Enough is ascertained as his to provide us with the means for a complete understanding of his opinions and his conduct. It is Defoe's misfortune that his biographers on the large scale have occupied themselves too much with subordinate details, and have been misled from a true appreciation of his main lines of thought and action by religious, political, and hero-worshipping bias. For the following sketch, taking Mr. Lee's elaborate work as my chronological guide, I have read such of Defoe's undoubted writings as are accessible in the Library of the British Museum —there is no complete collection, I believe, in existence—and endeavoured to connect them and him with the history of the time.

W. M.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I

PAGE.

DEFOE'S YOUTH AND EARLY PURSUITS 7

CHAPTER II.

KING WILLIAM'S ADJUTANT 14

CHAPTER III.

A MARTYR TO DISSENT? 24

CHAPTER IV.

THE REVIEW OF THE AFFAIRS OF FRANCE 36

CHAPTER V.

THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE AND UNION 43

CHAPTER VI.

DR. SACHEVERELL, AND THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT 50

CHAPTER VII.

DIFFICULTIES IN RE-CHANGING SIDES 68

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE.
LATER JOURNALISTIC LABOURS 75

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLACE OF DEFOE'S FICTIONS IN HIS LIFE 84

CHAPTER X.

HIS MYSTERIOUS END 99

DANIEL DEFOE.

CHAPTER I.

DEFOE'S YOUTH AND EARLY PURSUITS.

THE life of a man of letters is not as a rule eventful. It may be rich in spiritual experiences, but it seldom is rich in active adventure. We ask his biographer to tell us what were his habits of composition, how he talked, how he bore himself in the discharge of his duties to his family, his neighbours, and himself; what were his beliefs on the great questions that concern humanity. We desire to know what he said and wrote, not what he did beyond the study and the domestic or the social circle. The chief external facts in his career are the dates of the publication of his successive books.

Daniel Defoe is an exception to this rule. He was a man of action as well as a man of letters. The writing of the books which have given him immortality was little more than an accident in his career, a comparatively trifling and casual item in the total expenditure of his many-sided energy. He was nearly sixty when he wrote *Robinson Crusoe*. Before that event he had been a rebel, a merchant, a manufacturer, a writer of popular satires in verse, a bankrupt; had acted as secretary to a public commission, been employed in secret services by five successive Administrations, written innumerable pamphlets, and edited more than one newspaper. He had led, in fact, as adventurous a life as any of his own heroes, and had met quickly succeeding difficulties with equally ready and fertile ingenuity.

For many of the incidents in Defoe's life we are indebted to himself. He had all the vaingloriousness of exuberant vitality, and was animated in the recital of his own adventures. Scattered throughout his various works are the materials for a tolerably complete autobiography. This is in one respect an advantage for any one who attempts to give an account of his life. But it has a counterbalancing disadvantage in the circumstance that there is grave reason to doubt his veracity. Defoe was a great story-teller

in more senses than one. We can hardly believe a word that he says about himself without independent confirmation.

Defoe was born in London, in 1661. It is a characteristic circumstance that his name is not his own, except in the sense that it was assumed by himself. The name of his father, who was a butcher in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, was Foe. His grandfather was a Northamptonshire yeoman. In his *True Born Englishman*, Defoe spoke very contemptuously of families that professed to have come over with "the Norman bastard," defying them to prove whether their ancestors were drummers or colonels; but apparently he was not above the vanity of making the world believe that he himself was of Norman-French origin. Yet such was the restless energy of the man that he could not leave even his adopted name alone; he seems to have been about forty when he first changed his signature "D. Foe" into the surname of "Defoe;" but his patient biographer, Mr. Lee, has found several later instances of his subscribing himself "D. Foe," "D. F.," and "De Foe" in alternation with the "Daniel De Foe," or "Daniel Defoe," which has become his accepted name in literature.

In middle age, when Defoe was taunted with his want of learning, he retorted that if he was a blockhead it was not the fault of his father, who had "spared nothing in his education that might qualify him to match the accurate Dr. Browne, or the learned Observator." His father was a Nonconformist, a member of the congregation of Dr. Annesley, and the son was originally intended for the Dissenting ministry. "It was his disaster," he said afterwards, "first to be set apart for, and then to be set apart from, that sacred employ." He was placed at an academy for the training of ministers at the age, it is supposed, of about fourteen, and probably remained there for the full course of five years. He has himself explained why, when his training was completed, he did not proceed to the office of the pulpit, but changed his views and resolved to engage in business as a hose-merchant. The sum of the explanation is that the ministry seemed to him at the time to be neither honourable, agreeable, nor profitable. It was degraded, he thought, by the entrance of men who had neither physical nor intellectual qualification for it, who had received out of a denominational fund only such an education as made them pedants rather than Christian gentleman of high learning, and who had consequently to submit to shameful and degrading practices in their efforts to obtain congregations and subsistence. Besides, the behaviour of congregations to their ministers, who were dependent, was often objectionable and un-Christian. And finally, far-flown birds having fine feathers, the prizes of the ministry in London were generally given to strangers, "eminent ministers *called* from all parts of England," some even from Scotland, finding acceptance in the metropolis before having received any formal ordination.

Though the education of his "fund bred" companions, as he calls them, at Mr. Morton's Academy in Newington Green, was such as to excite Defoe's contempt, he bears testimony to Mr.

Morton's excellence as a teacher, and instances the names of several pupils who did credit to his labours. In one respect Mr. Morton's system was better than that which then prevailed at the Universities; all dissertations were written and all disputations held in English; and hence it resulted, Defoe says, that his pupils, though they were "not destitute in the languages," were "made masters of the English tongue, and more of them excelled in that particular than of any school at that time." Whether Defoe obtained at Newington the rudiments of all the learning which he afterwards claimed to be possessed of, we do not know; but the taunt frequently levelled at him by University men of being an "illiterate fellow" and no scholar, was one that he bitterly resented, and that drew from him many protestations and retorts. In 1705, he angrily challenged John Tutchin "to translate with him any Latin, French, or Italian author, and after that to retranslate them crosswise for twenty pounds each book;" and he replied to Swift, who had spoken of him scornfully as "an illiterate fellow, whose name I forget," that "he had been in his time pretty well master of five languages, and had not lost them yet, though he wrote no bill at his door, nor set Latin quotations on the front of the *Review*." To the end of his days Defoe could not forget this taunt of want of learning. In one of the papers in *Applebee's Journal* identified by Mr. Lee (below, Chapter VIII.), he discussed what is to be understood by "learning," and drew the following sketch of his own attainments:—

"I remember an Author in the World some years ago, who was generally upbraided with Ignorance, and called an "Illiterate Fellow,' by some of the *Beau-Monde* of the last Age. . . .

"I happened to come into this Person's Study once, and I found him busy translating a Description of the Course of the River Boristhenes, out of *Bleau's* Geography, written in *Spanish*. Another time I found him translating some Latin Paragraphs out of *Leubinitz Theatri Cometici*, being a learned Discourse upon Comets; and that I might see whether it was genuine, I looked on some part of it that he had finished, and found by it that he understood the Latin very well, and had perfectly taken the sense of that difficult Author. In short, I found he understood the *Latin*, the *Spanish*, the *Italian*, and could read the *Greek*, and I knew before that he spoke *French* fluently—*yet this Man was no Scholar*.

"As to Science, on another Occasion, I heard him dispute (in such a manner as surprised me) upon the motions of the Heavenly bodies, the Distance, Magnitude, Revolutions, and especially the Influences of the Planets, the Nature and probable Revolutions of Comets, the excellency of the New Philosophy, and the like; *but this Man was no Scholar*.

"In Geography and History he had all the World at his Finger's ends. He talked of the most distant Countries with an inimitable Exactness; and changing from one Place to another, the Company thought, of every Place or Country he named, that certainly he must have been born there. He knew not only where every Thing was, but what everybody did in every Part of the World: I mean, what Businesses, what Trade, what Manufacture, was carrying on in every Part of the World; and had the History of almost all the Nations of the World in his Head —*yet this Man was no Scholar*.

"This put me upon wondering, ever so long ago, what this *strange Thing* called a Man of Learning *was*, and what is it that constitutes a *Scholar?* For, *said I*, here's a man speaks five Languages and reads the Sixth, is a master of Astronomy, Geography, History, and abundance of other useful Knowledge (which I do not mention, that you may not guess at the Man, who is too Modest to desire it), and yet, they say *this Man is no Scholar*.

How much of this learning Defoe acquired at school, and how much he picked up afterwards under the pressure of the necessities of his business, it is impossible to determine, but at any rate it was at least as good a qualification for writing on public affairs as the more limited and accurate scholarship of his more academic rivals. Whatever may have been the extent of his knowledge when he passed from Mr. Morton's tuition, qualified but no longer willing to become a Dissenting preacher, he did not allow it to rust unused; he at once mobilised his forces for active service. They were keen politicians, naturally, at the Newington Academy, and the times furnished ample materials for their discussions. As Nonconformists they were very closely affected by the struggle between Charles II. and the defenders of Protestantism and popular liberties. What part Defoe took in the excitement of the closing years of the reign of Charles must be matter of conjecture, but there can be little doubt that he was active on the popular side. He had but one difference then, he afterwards said in one of his tracts, with his party. He would not join them in wishing for the success of the Turks in besieging Vienna, because, though the Austrians were Papists, and though the Turks were ostensibly on the side of the Hungarian reformers whom the Austrian Government had persecuted, he had read the history of the Turks and could not pray for their victory over Christians of any denomination. "Though then but a young man, and a younger author" (this was in 1683), "he opposed it and wrote against it, which was taken very unkindly indeed." From these words it would seem that Defoe had thus early begun to write pamphlets on questions of the hour. As he was on the weaker side, and any writing might have cost him his life, it is probable that he did not put his name to any of these tracts; none of them have been identified; but his youth was strangely unlike his mature manhood if he was not justified in speaking of himself as having been then an "author." Nor was he content merely with writing. It would have been little short of a miracle if his restless energy had allowed him to lie quiet while the air was thick with political intrigue. We may be sure that he had a voice in some of the secret associations in which plans were discussed of armed resistance to the tyranny of the King. We have his own word for it that he took part in the Duke of Monmouth's rising, when the whips of Charles were exchanged for the scorpions of James. He boasted of this when it became safe to do so, and the truth of the boast derives incidental confirmation from the fact that the names of three of his fellow-students at Newington appear in the list of the victims of Jeffreys and Kirke.

Escaping the keen hunt that was made for all participators in the rebellion, Defoe, towards the close of 1685, began business as a hosier or hose-factor in Freeman's Court, Cornhill. The precise nature of his trade has been disputed; and it does not particularly concern us here. When taunted afterwards with having been apprentice to a hosier, he indignantly denied the fact, and explained that though he had been a trader in hosiery he had never been a shopkeeper. A passing illustration in his *Essay on Projects*, drawn from his own experience, shows that he imported goods in the course of his business from abroad; he speaks of sometimes having paid more in insurance premios than he had cleared by a voyage. From a story which he tells in his *Complete English Tradesman*, recalling the cleverness with which he defeated an attempt to outwit him about a consignment of brandy, we learn that his business sometimes took him to Spain. This is nearly all that we know about his first adventure in trade, except that after seven years, in 1692, he had to flee from his creditors. He hints in one of his *Reviews* that this misfortune was brought about by the frauds of swindlers, and it deserves to be recorded that he made the honourable boast that he afterwards paid off his obligations. The truth of the boast is independently confirmed by the admission of a controversial enemy, that very Tutchin whom he challenged to translate Latin with him. That Defoe should have referred so little to his own experience in the *Complete English Tradesman*, a series of Familiar Letters which he published late in life "for the instruction of our Inland Tradesmen, and especially of Young Beginners," is accounted for when we observe the class of persons to whom the letters were addressed. He distinguishes with his usual clearness between the different ranks of those employed in the production and exchange of goods, and intimates that his advice is not intended for the highest grade of traders, the merchants, whom he defines by what he calls the vulgar expression, as being "such as trade beyond sea." Although he was eloquent in many books and pamphlets in upholding the dignity of trade, and lost no opportunity of scoffing at pretentious gentility, he never allows us to forget that this was the grade to which he himself belonged, and addresses the petty trader from a certain altitude. He speaks in the preface to the *Complete Tradesman* of unfortunate creatures who have blown themselves up in trade, whether "for want of wit or from too much wit;" but lest he should be supposed to allude to his own misfortunes, he does not say that he miscarried himself, but that he "had seen in a few years' experience many young tradesmen miscarry." At the same time it is fair to conjecture that when Defoe warns the young tradesman against fancying himself a politician or a man of letters, running off to the coffee-house when he ought to be behind the counter, and reading Virgil and Horace when he should be busy over his journal and his ledger, he was glancing at some of the causes which conduced to his own failure as a merchant. And when he cautions the beginner against going too fast, and holds up to him as a type and exemplar the carrier's waggon, which "keeps

wagging and always goes on," "and as softly as it goes" can yet in time go far, we may be sure that he was thinking of the over-rashness with which he had himself embarked in speculation.

There can be no doubt that eager and active as Defoe was in his trading enterprises, he was not so wrapt up in them as to be an unconcerned spectator of the intense political life of the time. When King James aimed a blow at the Church of England by removing the religious disabilities of all dissenters, Protestant and Catholic, in his Declaration of Indulgence, some of Defoe's co-religionists were ready to catch at the boon without thinking of its consequences. He differed from them, he afterwards stated, and "as he used to say that he had rather the Popish House of Austria should ruin the Protestants in Hungaria, than the infidel House of Ottoman should ruin both Protestants and Papists by overrunning Germany," so now " he told the Dissenters he had rather the Church of England should pull our clothes off by fines and forfeitures, than the Papists should fall both upon the Church and the Dissenters, and pull our skins off by fire and faggot." He probably embodied these conclusions of his vigorous common sense in a pamphlet, though no pamphlet on the subject known for certain to be his has been preserved. Mr. Lee is over-rash in identifying as Defoe's a quarto sheet of that date entitled " A Letter containing some reflections on His Majesty's declaration for Liberty of Conscience." Defoe may have written many pamphlets on the stirring events of the time, which have not come down to us. It may have been then that he acquired, or made a valuable possession by practice, that marvellous facility with his pen which stood him in such stead in after-life. It would be no wonder if he wrote dozens of pamphlets, every one of which disappeared. The pamphlet then occupied the place of the newspaper leading article. The newspapers of the time were veritable chronicles of news, and not organs of opinion. The expression of opinion was not then associated with the dissemination of facts and rumours. A man who wished to influence public opinion wrote a pamphlet, small or large, a single leaf or a tract of a few pages, and had it hawked about the streets and sold in the bookshops. These pamphlets issued from the press in swarms, were thrown aside when read, and hardly preserved except by accident. That Defoe, if he wrote any or many, should not have reprinted them when fifteen years afterwards he published a collection of his works, is intelligible; he republished only such of his tracts as had not lost their practical interest. If, however, we indulge in the fancy, warranted so far by his describing himself as having been a young "author" in 1683, that Defoe took an active part in polemical literature under Charles and James, we must remember that the censorship of the press was then active, and that Defoe must have published under greater disadvantages than those who wrote on the side of the Court.

At the Revolution, in 1688, Defoe lost no time in making his adhesion to the new monarch conspicuous. He was, according to Oldmixon, one of "a royal regiment of volunteer horse, made up

of the chief citizens, who, being gallantly mounted and richly accoutred, were led by the Earl of Monmouth, now Earl of Peterborough, and attended their Majesties from Whitehall" to a banquet given by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City. Three years afterwards, on the occasion of the Jacobite plot in which Lord Preston was the leading figure, he published the first pamphlet that is known for certain to be his. It is in verse, and is entitled *A New Discovery of an Old Intrigue, a Satire levelled at Treachery and Ambition.* In the preface, the author said that "he had never drawn his pen before," and that he would never write again unless this effort produced a visible reformation. If we take this literally, we must suppose that his claim to have been an author eighteen years before had its origin in his fitful vanity. The literary merits of the satire, when we compare it with the powerful verse of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, to which he refers in the exordium, are not great. Defoe prided himself upon his verse, and in a catalogue of the Poets in one of his later pieces assigned himself the special province of "lampoon." He possibly believed that his clever doggerel was a better title to immortality than *Robinson Crusoe.* The immediate popular effect of his satires gave some encouragement to this belief, but they are comparatively dull reading for posterity. The clever hits at living City functionaries, indicated by their initials and nicknames, the rough ridicule and the biting innuendo, were telling in their day, but the lampoons have perished with their objects. The local celebrity of Sir Ralph and Sir Peter, Silly Will and Captain Tom the Tailor, has vanished, and Defoe's hurried and formless lines, incisive as their vivid force must have been, are not redeemed from dulness for modern readers by the few bright epigrams with which they are besprinkled.

CHAPTER II.

KING WILLIAM'S ADJUTANT.

DEFOE'S first business catastrophe happened about 1692. He is said to have temporarily absconded, and to have parleyed with his creditors from a distance till they agreed to accept a composition. Bristol is named as having been his place of refuge, and there is a story that he was known there as the Sunday Gentleman, because he appeared on that day, and that day only, in fashionable attire, being kept indoors during the rest of the week by fear of the bailiffs. But he was of too buoyant a temperament to sink under his misfortune from the sense of having brought it on himself, and the cloud soon passed away. A man so fertile in expedients, and ready, according to his own ideal of a thoroughbred trader, to turn himself to anything, could not long remain unemployed. He had various business offers, and among others an invitation from some merchants to settle at Cadiz as a commission agent, "with offers of very good commissions." But Providence, he tells us, and we may add, a shrewd confidence in his own powers, "placed a secret aversion in his mind to quitting England upon any account, and made him refuse the best offers of that kind." He stayed at home, "to be concerned with some eminent persons in proposing ways and means to the Government for raising money to supply the occasions of the war then newly begun." He also wrote a vigorous and loyal pamphlet, entitled, *The Englishman's Choice and True Interest: in the vigorous prosecution of the war against France, and serving K. William and Q. Mary, and acknowledging their right.* As a reward for his literary or his financial services, or for both, he was appointed, "without the least application" of his own, Accountant to the Commissioners of the Glass Duty, and held this post till the duty was abolished in 1699.

From 1694 to the end of William's reign was the most prosperous and honourable period in Defoe's life. His services to the Government did not absorb the whole of his restless energy. He still had time for private enterprise, and started a manufactory of bricks and pantiles at Tilbury, where, Mr. Lee says, judging from fragments recently dug up, he made good sound sonorous bricks, although according to another authority such a thing was impossible out of any material existing in the neighbourhood. Anyhow,

Defoe prospered, and set up a coach and a pleasure-boat. Nor must we forget what is so much to his honour, that he set himself to pay his creditors in full, voluntarily disregarding the composition which they had accepted. In 1705 he was able to boast that he had reduced his debts in spite of many difficulties from 17.000*l*, to 5,000*l*., but these sums included liabilities resulting from the failure of his pantile factory.

Defoe's first conspicuous literary service to King William, after he obtained Government employment, was a pamphlet on the question of a Standing Army raised after the Peace of Ryswick in 1697. This Pen and Ink War, as he calls it, which followed close on the heels of the great European struggle, had been raging for some time before Defoe took the field. Hosts of writers had appeared to endanger the permanence of the triumph of William's arms and diplomacy by demanding the disbandment of his tried troops, as being a menace to domestic liberties. Their arguments had been encountered by no less zealous champions of the King's cause. The battle, in fact, had been won when Defoe issued his *Argument showing that a Standing Army, with consent of Parliament, is not inconsistent with a Free Government.* He was able to boast in his preface that " if books and writings would not, God be thanked the Parliament would confute " his adversaries. Nevertheless, though coming late in the day, Defoe's pamphlet was widely read, and must have helped to consolidate the victory.

Thus late in life did Defoe lay the first stone of his literary reputation. He was now in the thirty-eighth year of his age, his controversial genius in full vigour, and his mastery of language complete. None of his subsequent tracts surpass this as a piece of trenchant and persuasive reasoning. It shows at their very highest his marvellous powers of combining constructive with destructive criticism. He dashes into the lists with good-humoured confidence, bearing the banner of clear common sense, and disclaiming sympathy with extreme persons of either side. He puts his case with direct and plausible force, addressing his readers vivaciously as plain people like himself, among whom as reasonable men there cannot be two opinions. He cuts rival arguments to pieces with dexterous strokes, representing them as the confused reasoning of well-meaning but dull intellects, and dances with lively mockery on the fragments. If the authors of such arguments knew their own minds, they would be entirely on his side. He echoes the pet prejudices of his readers as the props and mainstays of his thesis, and boldly laughs away misgivings of which they are likely to be half ashamed. He makes no parade of logic; he is only a plain freeholder like the mass whom he addresses, though he knows twenty times as much as many writers of more pretension. He never appeals to passion or imagination; what he strives to enlist on his side is homely self-interest, and the ordinary sense of what is right and reasonable. There is little regularity of method in the development of his argument; that he leaves to more anxious and elaborate masters of style. For himself he is content to start from

a bold and clear statement of his own opinion, and proceeds buoyantly and discursively to engage and scatter his enemies as they turn up, without the least fear of being able to fight his way back to his original base. He wrote for a class to whom a prolonged intellectual operation, however comprehensive and complete, was distasteful. To persuade the mass of the freeholders was his object, and for such an object there are no political tracts in the language at all comparable to Defoe's. He bears some resemblance to Cobbett, but he had none of Cobbett's brutality; his faculties were more adroit, and his range of vision infinitely wider. Cobbett was a demagogue, Defoe a popular statesman. The one was qualified to lead the people, the other to guide them. Cobbett is contained in Defoe as the less is contained in the greater.

King William obtained a standing army from Parliament, but not so large an army as he wished, and it was soon afterwards still further reduced. Meantime, Defoe employed his pen in promoting objects which were dear to the King's heart. His *Essay on Projects*—which "relate to Civil Polity as well as matters of negoce"—was calculated, in so far as it advocated joint-stock enterprise, to advance one of the objects of the statesmen of the Revolution, the committal of the moneyed classes to the established Government, and against a dynasty which might plausibly be mistrusted of respect for visible accumulations of private wealth. Defoe's projects were of an extremely varied kind. The classification was not strict. His spirited definition of the word "projects" included Noah's Ark and the Tower of Babel, as well as Captain Phipps's scheme for raising the wreck of a Spanish ship laden with silver. He is sometimes credited with remarkable shrewdness in having anticipated in this Essay some of the greatest public improvements of modern times—the protection of seamen, the higher education of women, the establishment of banks and benefit societies, the construction of highways. But it is not historically accurate to give him the whole credit of these conceptions. Most of them were floating about at the time, so much so that he had to defend himself against a charge of plagiarism, and few of them have been carried out in accordance with the essential features of his plans. One remarkable circumstance in Defoe's projects, which we may attribute either to his own natural bent or to his compliance with the King's humour, is the extent to which he advocated Government interference. He proposed, for example, an income-tax, and the appointment of a commission who should travel through the country and ascertain by inquiry that the tax was not evaded. In making this proposal he shows an acquaintance with private incomes in the City, which raises some suspicion as to the capacity in which he was "associated with certain eminent persons in proposing ways and means to the Government." In his article on Banks, he expresses himself dissatisfied that the Government did not fix a maximum rate of interest for the loans made by chartered banks; they were otherwise, he complained, of no assistance to the poor trader, who might as well go to the goldsmiths as before.

His Highways project was a scheme for making national highways on a scale worthy of Baron Haussmann. There is more fervid imagination and daring ingenuity than business talent in Defoe's essay; if his trading speculations were conducted with equal rashness, it is not difficult to understand their failure. The most notable of them are the schemes of a dictator, rather than of the adviser of a free Government. The essay is chiefly interesting as a monument of Defoe's marvellous force of mind, and strange mixture of steady sense with incontinent flightiness. There are ebullient sallies in it which we generally find only in the productions of madmen and charlatans, and yet it abounds in suggestions which statesmen might profitably have set themselves with due adaptations to carry into effect. The *Essay on Projects* might alone be adduced in proof of Defoe's title to genius.

One of the first projects to which the Government of the Revolution addressed itself was the reformation of manners—a purpose at once commendable in itself and politically useful as distinguishing the new Government from the old. Even while the King was absent in Ireland at the beginning of his reign, the Queen issued a letter calling upon all justices of the peace and other servants of the Crown to exert themselves in suppressing the luxuriant growth of vice, which had been fostered by the example of the Court of Charles. On the conclusion of the war in 1697, William issued a most elaborate proclamation to the same effect, and an address was voted by Parliament, asking his Majesty to see that wickedness was discouraged in high places. The lively pamphlet in which Defoe lent his assistance to the good work entitled *The Poor Man's Plea*, was written in the spirit of the parliamentary address. It was of no use to pass laws and make declarations and proclamations for the reform of the common *plebeii*. the poor man pleaded, so long as the mentors of the laws were themselves corrupt. His argument was spiced with amusing anecdotes to show the prevalence of swearing and drunkenness among members of the judicial bench. Defoe appeared several times afterwards in the character of a reformer of manners, sometimes in verse, sometimes in prose. When the retort was made that his own manners were not perfect, he denied that this invalidated the worth of his appeal, but at the same time challenged his accusers to prove him guilty of any of the vices that he had satirised.

It is impossible now to ascertain what induced Defoe to break with the Dissenters, among whom he had been brought up, but break with them he did in his pamphlet against the practice of *Occasional Conformity*. This practice of occasionally taking communion with the Established Church, as a qualification for public office, had grown up after the Revolution, and had attracted very little notice till a Dissenting lord mayor, after attending church one Sunday forenoon, went in the afternoon with all the insignia of his office to a Conventicle. Defoe's objection to this is indicated in his quotation, "If the Lord be God, follow Him, but if Baal, then

follow him." A man, he contended, who could reconcile it with his conscience to attend the worship of the Church, had no business to be a Dissenter. Occasional conformity was "either a sinful act in itself, or else his dissenting before was sinful." The Dissenters naturally did not like this intolerant logical dilemma, and resented its being forced upon them by one of their own number against a practical compromise to which the good sense of the majority of them assented. No reply was made to the pamphlet when first issued in 1698; and two or three years afterwards Defoe, exulting in the unanswerable logic of his position, reprinted it with a prefatory challenge to Mr. Howe, an eminent Dissenting minister. During the next reign, however, when a bill was introduced to prohibit the practice of occasional conformity, Defoe strenuously wrote against it as a breach of the Toleration Act and a measure of persecution. In strict logic it is possible to make out a case for his consistency, but the reasoning must be fine, and he cannot be acquitted of having in the first instance practically justified a persecution which he afterwards condemned. In neither case does he point at the repeal of the Test Act as his object, and it is impossible to explain his attitude in both cases on the ground of principle. However much he objected to see the sacrament taken as a matter of form, it was hardly his province, in the circumstances in which Dissenters then stood, to lead an outcry against the practice; and if he considered it scandalous and sinful, he could not with much consistency protest against the prohibition of it as an act of persecution. Of this no person was better aware than Defoe himself, and it is a curious circumstance that, in his first pamphlet on the bill for putting down occasional conformity, he ridiculed the idea of its being persecution to suppress politic or state Dissenters, and maintained that the bill did not concern true Dissenters at all. To this, however, we must refer again in connection with his celebrated tract, *The Shortest Way with Dissenters*.

The troubles into which the European system was plunged by the death of the childless King of Spain, and that most dramatic of historical surprises, the bequest of his throne by a death-bed will to the Duke of Anjou, the second grandson of Louis XIV., furnished Defoe with a great opportunity for his controversial genius. In Charles II.'s will, if the legacy was accepted, William saw the ruin of a life-long policy. Louis, though he was doubly pledged against acknowledging the will, having renounced all pretensions to the throne of Spain for himself and his heirs in the Treaty of the Pyrenees, and consented in two successive treaties of partition to a different plan of succession, did not long hesitate; the news that he had saluted his grandson King of Spain followed close upon the news of Charles's death. The balance of the great Catholic Powers which William had established by years of anxious diplomacy and costly war, was toppled over by a stroke of the pen. With Spain and Italy virtually added to his dominions, the French King would now be supreme upon the Continent. Louis

soon showed that this was his view of what had happened, by saying that the Pyrenees had ceased to exist. He gave a practical illustration of the same view by seizing, with the authority of his grandson, the frontier towns of the Spanish Netherlands, which were garrisoned under a special treaty by Dutch troops. Though deeply enraged at the bad faith of the most Christian King, William was not dismayed. The stone which he had rolled up the hill with such effort had suddenly rolled down again, but he was eager to renew his labours. Before, however, he could act, he found himself, to his utter astonishment and mortification, paralysed by the attitude of the English Parliament. His alarm at the accession of a Bourbon to the Spanish throne was not shared by the ruling classes in England. They declared that they liked the Spanish King's will better than William's partition. France, they argued, would gain much less by a dynastic alliance with Spain, which would exist no longer than their common interests dictated, than by the complete acquisition of the Spanish provinces in Italy.

William lost no time in summoning a new Parliament. An overwhelming majority opposed the idea of vindicating the Partition Treaty by arms. They pressed him to send a message of recognition to Philip V. Even the occupation of the Flemish fortresses did not change their temper. That, they said, was the affair of the Dutch; it did not concern England. In vain William tried to convince them that the interests of the two Protestant States were identical. In the numerous pamphlets that were hatched by the ferment, it was broadly insinuated that the English people might pay too much for the privilege of having a Dutch King, who had done nothing for them that they could not have done for themselves, and who was perpetually sacrificing the interests of his adopted country to the necessities of his beloved Holland. What had England gained by the peace of Ryswick? Was England to be dragged into another exhausting war, merely to secure a strong frontier for the Dutch? The appeal found ready listeners among a people in whose minds the recollections of the last war were still fresh, and who still felt the burdens it had left behind. William did not venture to take any steps to form an alliance against France, till a new incident emerged to shake the country from its mood of surly calculation. When James II. died and Louis recognised the Pretender as King of England, all thoughts of isolation from a Continental confederacy were thrown to the winds. William dissolved his Long Parliament, and found the new House as warlike as the former had been peaceful. "Of all the nations in the world," cried Defoe, in commenting on this sudden change of mood, "there is none that I know of so entirely governed by their humour as the English."

For ten months Defoe had been vehemently but vainly striving to accomplish by argument what had been wrought in an instant by the French King's insufferable insult. It is one of the most brilliant periods of his political activity. Comparatively undistinguished before, he now, at the age of forty, stepped into the foremost rank of publicists. He lost not a moment in throwing

himself into the fray as the champion of the king's policy. Charles of Spain died on the 22nd of October, 1701; by the middle of November, a few days after the news had reached England, and before the French King's resolve to acknowledge the legacy was known, Defoe was ready with a pamphlet to the clear and stirring title of —*The Two Great questions considered.* I. *What the French King will do with respect to the Spanish Monarchy.* II. *What measures the English ought to take.* If the French King were wise, he argued, he would reject the dangerous gift for his grandson. But if he accepted it, England had no choice but to combine with her late allies the Emperor and the States, and compel the Duke of Anjou to withdraw his claims. This pamphlet being virulently attacked, and its author accused of bidding for a place at Court, Defoe made a spirited rejoinder, and seized the occasion to place his arguments in still clearer light. Between them the two pamphlets are a masterly exposition, from the point of view of English interests, of the danger of permitting the Will to be fulfilled. He tears the arguments of his opponents to pieces with supreme scorn. What matters it to us who is King of Spain? asks one adversary. As well ask, retorts Defoe, what it matters to us who is King of Ireland. All this talk about the Balance of Power, says another, is only "a shoeing-horn to draw on a standing army." We do not want an army; only let us make our fleet strong enough and we may defy the world; our militia is perfectly able to defend us against invasion. If our militia is so strong, is Defoe's reply, why should a standing-army make us fear for our domestic liberties? But if you object to a standing-army in England, avert the danger by subsidising allies and raising and paying troops in Germany and the Low Countries. Even if we are capable of beating off invasion, it is always wise policy to keep the war out of our own country, and not trust to such miracles as the dispersion of the Armada. In war, Defoe says, repeating a favourite axiom of his, "it is not the longest sword but the longest purse that conquers," and if the French get the Spanish crown, they get the richest trade in the world into their hands. The French would prove better husbands of the wealth of Mexico and Peru than the Spaniards. They would build fleets with it, which would place our American plantations at their mercy. Our own trade with Spain, one of the most profitable fields of our enterprise, would at once be ruined. Our Mediterranean trade would be burdened with the impost of a toll at Gibraltar. In short Defoe contended, if the French acquired the upper hand in Spain, nothing but a miracle could save England from becoming practically a French province.

Defoe's appeal to the sense of self-interest fell, however, upon deaf ears. No eloquence or ingenuity of argument could have availed to stem the strong current of growling prepossession. He was equally unsuccessful in his attempt to touch deeper feelings by exhibiting in a pamphlet, which is perhaps the ablest of the series, *The danger of the Protestant Religion, from the present prospect of a Religious War in Europe.* "Surely you cannot object to a standing army

for the defence of your religion?" he argued; "for if you do, then you stand convicted of valuing your liberties more than your religion, which ought to be your first and highest concern." Such scraps of rhetorical logic were but as straws in the storm of anti-warlike passion that was then raging. Nor did Defoe succeed in turning the elections by addressing "to the good people of England" his *Six Distinguishing Characters of a Parliament Man*, or by protesting as a freeholder against the levity of making the strife between the new and the old East India Companies a testing question, when the very existence of the kingdom was at stake. His pamphlets were widely distributed, but he might as soon have tried to check a tempest by throwing handfuls of leaves into it. One great success, however, he had, and that, strangely enough, in a direction in which it was least to be anticipated. No better proof could be given that the good-humoured magnanimity and sense of fair-play on which English people pride themselves is more than an empty boast than the reception accorded to Defoe's *True-Born Englishman*. King William's unpopularity was at its height. A party writer of the time had sought to inflame the general dislike to his Dutch favourites by "a vile pamphlet in abhorred verse," entitled *The Foreigners*, in which they are loaded with scurrilous insinuations. It required no ordinary courage in the state of the national temper at that moment to venture upon the line of retort that Defoe adopted. What were the English, he demanded, that they should make a mock of foreigners? They were the most mongrel race that ever lived upon the face of the earth; there was no such thing as a true-born Englishman; they were all the offspring of foreigners; what was more, of the scum of foreigners.

"For Englishman to boast of generation
Cancels their knowledge, and lampoons the nation.
A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,
In speech an irony, in fact a fiction.
* * * * * *
And here begins the ancient pedigree
That so exalts our poor nobility.
'Tis that from some French trooper they derive,
Who with the Norman bastard did arrive;
The trophies of the families appear,
Some show the sword, the bow, and some the spear
Which their great ancestor, forsooth, did wear.
These in the herald's register remain,
Their noble mean extraction to explain,
Yet who the hero was no man can tell,
Whether a drummer or colonel;
The silent record blushes to reveal
Their undescended dark original.
* * * * * *
"These are the heroes that despise the Dutch
And rail at new-come foreigners so much;
Forgetting that themselves are all derived
From the most scoundrel race that ever lived;

A horrid crowd of rambling thieves and drones,
Who ransacked kingdoms and dispeopled towns;
The Pict and painted Briton, treacherous Scot,
By hunger, theft, and rapine hither brought;
Norwegian pirates, buccaneering Danes,
Whose red-haired offspring everywhere remains;
Who joined with Norman French compound the breed
From whence your true-born Englishmen proceed.

"And lest, by length of time, it be pretended,
The climate may this modern breed have mended,
Wise Providence, to keep us where we are,
Mixes us daily with exceeding care;
We have been Europe's sink, the jakes where she
Voids all her offal outcast progeny;
From our fifth Henry's time the strolling bands
Of banished fugitives from neighbouring lands
Have here a certain sanctuary found:
The eternal refuge of the vagabond,
Wherein but half a common age of time,
Borrowing new blood and manners from the clime,
Proudly they learn all mankind to contemn,
And all their race are true-born Englishmen."

As may be judged from this specimen, there is little delicacy in Defoe's satire. The lines run on from beginning to end in the same strain of bold, broad, hearty banter, as if the whole piece had been written off at a heat. The mob did not lynch the audacious humourist. In the very height of their fury against foreigners, they stopped short to laugh at themselves. They were tickled by the hard blows as we may suppose a rhinoceros to be tickled by the strokes of an oaken cudgel. Defoe suddenly woke to find himself the hero of the hour, at least with the London populace. The pamphlet was pirated, and eighty thousand copies, according to his own calculation, were sold in the streets. Henceforth he described himself in his title-pages as the author of the *True-Born Englishman*, and frequently did himself the honour of quoting from the work as from a well-established classic. It was also, he has told us, the means of his becoming personally known to the King, whom he had hitherto served from a distance.

Defoe was not the man to be abashed by his own popularity. He gloried in it, and added to his reputation by taking a prominent part in the proceedings connected with the famous Kentish Petition, which marked the turn of the tide in favour of the King's foreign policy. Defoe was said to be the author of "Legion's Memorial" to the House of Commons, sternly warning the representatives of the freeholders that they had exceeded their powers in imprisoning the men who had prayed them to "turn their loyal addresses into Bills of Supply." When the Kentish Petitioners were liberated from the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and feasted by the citizens of Mercers' Hall, Defoe was seated next to them as an honoured guest.

Unfortunately for Defoe, William did not live long after he had been honoured with his Majesty's confidence. He declared afterwards that he had often been privately consulted by the King. The pamphlets which he wrote during the close of the reign are all such as might have been directly inspired. That on the Succession is chiefly memorable as containing a suggestion that the heirs of the Duke of Monmouth should be heard as to King Charles's alleged marriage with Lucy Walters. It is possible that this idea may have been sanctioned by the King, who had had painful experience of the disadvantages attending a ruler of foreign extraction, and besides had reason to doubt the attachment of the Princess Sophia to the Protestant faith. When the passionate aversion to war in the popular mind was suddenly changed by the recognition of the Pretender into an equally passionate thirst for it, and the King seized the opportunity to dissolve Parliament and get a new House in accord with the altered temper of the people, Defoe justified the appeal to the freeholders by an examination and assertion of "the Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England." His last service to the King was a pamphlet bearing the paradoxical title, *Reasons against a War with France.* As Defoe had for nearly a year been zealously working the public mind to a warlike pitch, this title is at first surprising, but the surprise disappears when we find that the pamphlet is an ingenious plea for beginning with a declaration of war against Spain, showing that not only was there just cause for such war, but that it would be extremely profitable, inasmuch as it would afford occasion for plundering the Spaniards in the West Indies, and thereby making up for whatever losses our trade might suffer from the French privateers. And it was more than a mere plundering descent that Defoe had in view; his object was that England should take actual possession of the Spanish Indies, and so rob Spain of its chief source of wealth. There was a most powerful buccaneering spirit concealed under the peacful title of this pamphlet. The trick of arresting attention by an unexpected thesis, such as this promise of reasons for peace when everybody was dreaming of war, is an art in which Defoe has never been surpassed. As we shall have occasion to see, he practised it more than once too often for his comfort.

CHAPTER III.

A MARTYR TO DISSENT?

FROM the death of the King in March, 1702, we must date a change in Defoe's relations with the ruling powers. Under William, his position as a political writer had been distinct and honourable. He supported William's policy warmly and straightforwardly, whether he divided it by his own judgment, or learned it by direct or indirect instructions or hints. When charged with writing for a place, he indignantly denied that he held either place or pension at Court, but at another time he admitted that he had been employed by the King and rewarded by him beyond his deserts. Any reward that he received for his literary services was well earned, and there was nothing dishonourable in accepting it. For concealing the connexion while the King was alive, he might plead the custom of the time. But in the confusion of parties and the uncertainty of government that followed William's death, Defoe slid into practices which cannot be justified by any standard of morality.

It was by accident that Defoe drifted into this equivocal position. His first writings under the new reign were in staunch consistency with what he had written before. He did not try to flatter the Queen as many others did by slighting her predecessors; on the contrary, he wrote a poem called *The Mock Mourners*, in which he extolled "the glorious memory"—a phrase which he did much to bring into use—and charged those who spoke disrespectfully of William with the vilest insolence and ingratitude. He sang the praises of the Queen also, but as he based his joy at her accession on an assurance that she would follow in William's footsteps, the compliment might be construed as an exhortation. Shortly afterwards, in another poem, *The Spanish Descent*, he took his revenge upon the fleet for not carrying out his West Indian scheme by ridiculing unmercifully their first fruitless cruise on the Spanish coast, taking care at the same time to exult in the capture of the galleons at Vigo. In yet another poem—the success of the *True Born Englishman* seems to have misguided him into the belief that he had a genius for verse—he reverted to the Reformation of Manners, and angered the Dissenters by belabouring certain magistrates of their denomination. A pamphlet entitled

A New Test of the Church of England's Loyalty—in which he twitted the High-Church party with being neither more nor less loyal than the Dissenters, inasmuch as they consented to the disposition of James and acquiesced in the accession of Anne—was better received by his co-religionists.

But when the Bill to prevent occasional conformity was introduced by some hot-headed partisans of the High Church, towards the close of 1702, with the Queen's warm approval, Defoe took a course which made the Dissenters threaten to cast him altogether out of the synagogue. We have already seen how Defoe had taken the lead in attacking the practice of occasional conformity. While his co-religionists were imprecating him as the man who had brought this persecution upon them, Defoe added to their ill-feeling by issuing a jaunty pamphlet in which he proved with provoking unanswerableness that all honest Dissenters were noways concerned in the Bill. Nobody, he said, with his usual bright audacity, but himself "who was altogether born in sin," saw the true scope of the measure. "All those people who designed the Act as a blow to the Dissenting interests in England are mistaken. All those who take it as a prelude or introduction to the further suppressing of the Dissenters, and a step to repealing the Toleration, or intend it as such, are mistaken. . . . . All those phlegmatic Dissenters who fancy themselves undone, and that persecution and desolation is at the door again, are mistaken. All those Dissenters who are really at all disturbed at it, either as an advantage gained by their enemies or as a real disaster upon themselves, are mistaken. All those Dissenters who deprecate it as a judgment, or would vote against it as such if it were in their power, are mistaken." In short, though he did not suppose that the movers of the Bill "did it in mere kindness to the Dissenters, in order to refine and purge them from the scandals which some people had brought upon them," nevertheless it was calculated to effect this object. The Dissenter being a man that was "something desirous of going to Heaven," ventured the displeasure of the civil magistrate at the command of his conscience, which warned him that there were things in the Established form of worship not agreeable to the Will of God as revealed in Scripture. There is nothing in the Act to the prejudice of this Dissenter; it affects only the Politic Dissenter, or State Dissenter, who if he can attend the Established worship without offending his conscience, has no cause to be a Dissenter. An act against occasional conformity would rid the Dissenting body of these lukewarm members, and the riddance would be a good thing for all parties.

It may have been that this cheerful argument, the legitimate development of Defoe's former writings on the subject, was intended to comfort his co-religionists at a moment when the passing of the Act seemed certain. They did not view it in that light; they resented it bitterly, as an insult in the hour of their misfortune from the man who had shown their enemies where to strike. When, however, the Bill, after passing the Commons, was opposed

and modified by the Lords, Defoe suddenly appeared on a new tack, publishing the most famous of his political pamphlets. *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, which has, by a strange freak of circumstances, gained him the honour of being enshrined as one of the martyrs of Dissent. In the "brief explanation" of the pamphlet which he gave afterwards, he declared that it had no bearing whatever upon the Occasional Conformity Bill, pointing to his former writings on the subject, in which he had denounced the practice, and welcomed the Bill as a useful instrument for purging the Dissenting bodies of half-and-half professors. It was intended, he said, as a banter upon the High-flying Tory Churchmen, putting into plain English the drift of their furious invectives against the Dissenters, and so, "by an irony not unusual," answering them out of their own mouths.

The *Shortest Way* is sometimes spoken of as a piece of exquisite irony, and on the other hand Mr. Saintsbury* has raised the question whether the representation of an extreme case, in which the veil is never lifted from the writer's own opinions, can properly be called irony at all. This last is, perhaps, a question belonging to the strict definition of the figures of speech; but, however that might be settled, it is a mistake to describe Defoe's art in this pamphlet as delicate. There are no subtle strokes of wit in it such as we find in some of Swift's ironical pieces. Incomparably more effective as an engine of controversy, it is not entitled to the same rank as a literary exercise. Its whole merit and its rousing political force lay in the dramatic genius with which Defoe personated the temper of a thorough-going High-flier, putting into plain and spirited English such sentiments as a violent partisan would not dare to utter except in the unguarded heat of familiar discourse, or the half-humorous ferocity of intoxication. Have done, he said, addressing the Dissenters, with this cackle about Peace and Union, and the Christian duties of moderation, which you raise now that you find "your day is over, your power gone, and the throne of this nation possessed by a Royal, English, true, and ever-constant member of and friend to the Church of England. . . . We have heard none of this lesson for fourteen years past. We have been huffed and bullied with your Act of Toleration; you have told us that you are the Church established by law as well as others; have set up your canting synagogues at our Church doors, and the Church and members have been loaded with reproaches, with oaths, associations, abjurations, and what not. Where has been the mercy, the forbearance, the charity, you have shown to tender consciences of the Church of England, that could not take oaths as fast as you made them; that having sworn allegiance to their lawful and rightful King, could not dispense with that oath, their King being still alive, and swear to your new hodge-podge of a Dutch constitution? . . . Now that the tables are turned upon you, you must not be persecuted; 'tis not a

* In an admirable article on Defoe in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Christian spirit." You talk of persecution; what persecution have you to complain of? "The first execution of the laws against Dissenters in England was in the days of King James I. And what did it amount to? Truly the worst they suffered was at their own request to let them go to New England and erect a new colony, and give them great privileges, grants, and suitable powers, keep them under protection, and defend them against all invaders, and receive no taxes or revenue from them. This was the cruelty of the Church of England—fatal lenity! 'Twas the ruin of that excellent prince, King Charles I. Had King James sent all the Puritans in England away to the West Indies, we had been a national, unmixed Church; the Church of England had been kept undivided and entire. To requite the lenity of the father, they take up arms against the son; conquer, pursue, take, imprison, and at last put to death the Anointed of God, and destroy the very being and nature of government, setting up a sordid impostor, who had neither title to govern, nor understanding to manage, but supplied that want with power, bloody and desperate councils, and craft, without conscience." How leniently had King Charles treated these barbarous regicides, coming in all mercy and love, cherishing them, preferring them, giving them employment in his service. As for King James, "as if mercy was the inherent quality of the family, he began his reign with unusual favour to them, nor could their joining with the Duke of Monmouth against him move him to do himself justice upon them, but that mistaken prince thought to win them by gentleness and love, proclaimed a universal liberty to them, and rather discountenanced the Church of England than them. How they requited him all they world knows." Under King William, "a king of their own," they "crope into all places of trust and profit," engrossed the ministry, and insulted the Church. But they must not expect this kind of thing to continue. "No, gentlemen, the time of mercy is past; your day of grace is over; you should have practised peace, and moderation, and charity, if you expected any yourselves."

In this heroic strain the pamphlet proceeds, reaching at length the suggestion that "if one severe law were made, and punctually executed, that whoever was found at a conventicle should be banished the nation, and the preacher be hanged, we should soon see an end of the tale—they would all come to church, and one age would make us all one again." That was the mock churchman's shortest way for the suppression of Dissent. He supported his argument by referring to the success with which Louis XIV. had put down the Huguenots. There was no good in half-measures, fines of five shillings a month for not coming to the Sacrament, and one shilling a week for not coming to church. It was vain to expect compliance from such trifling. "The light, foolish handling of them by mulcts, fines, etc., 'tis their glory and their advantage. If the gallows instead of the counter, and the galleys instead of the fines, were the reward of going to a conventicle, to preach or hear, there would not be so many sufferers—the spirit of martyrdom is

over. They that will go to church to be chosen sheriffs and mayors, would go to forty churches rather than be hanged." "Now let us crucify the thieves," said the author of this truculent advice in conclusion. "And may God Almighty put it into the hearts of all friends of truth to lift up a standard against pride and Antichrist, that the posterity of the sons of error may be rooted out from the face of this land for ever."

Defoe's disguise was so complete, his caricature of the ferocious High-flier so near to life, that at first people doubted whether the *Shortest Way* was the work of a satirist or a fanatic. When the truth leaked out, as it soon did, the Dissenters were hardly better pleased than while they feared that the proposal was serious. With the natural timidity of precariously situated minorities, they could not enter into the humour of it. The very title was enough to make them shrink and tremble. The only people who were really in a position to enjoy the jest were the Whigs. The High-Churchmen, some of whom, it is said, were at first so far taken in as to express their warm approval, were furious when they discovered the trick that had been played upon them. The Tory ministers of the Queen felt themselves bound to take proceedings against the author, whose identity seems to have soon become an open secret. Learning this, Defoe went into concealment. A proclamation offering a reward for his discovery was advertised in the *Gazette*. The description of the fugitive is interesting; it is the only extant record of Defoe's personal appearance, except the portrait prefixed to his collected works, in which the mole is faithfully reproduced:—

"He is a middle-aged spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark-brown coloured hair, but wears a wig; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth: was born in London, and for many years was a hose-factor in Freeman's Yard in Cornhill, and now is the owner of the brick and pantile works near Tilbury Fort in Essex."

This advertisement was issued on the 10th of January, 1703. Meantime the printer and the publisher were seized. From his safe hiding, Defoe put forth an explanation, protesting, as we have seen, that his pamphlet had not the least retrospect to or concern in the public bills in Parliament now depending, or any other proceeding of either House or of the Government relating to the Dissenters, whose occasional conformity the author has constantly opposed. It was merely, he pleaded, the cant of the Non-juring party exposed; and he mentioned several printed books in which the same objects were expressed, though not in words so plain, and at length. But the Government would not take this view; he had represented virulent partisans as being supreme in the Queen's counsels, and his design was manifest "to blacken the Church party as men of a persecuting spirit, and to prepare the mob for what further service he had for them to do." Finding that they

would not listen to him, Defoe surrendered himself, in order that others might not suffer for his offence. He was indicted on the 24th of February. On the 25th, the *Shortest Way* was brought under the notice of the House of Commons, and ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. His trial came on in July. He was found guilty of a seditious libel, and sentenced to pay a fine of 200 marks to the Queen, stand three times in the pillory, be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure, and find sureties for his good behaviour for seven years.

Defoe complained that three Dissenting ministers, whose poor he had fed in the days of his prosperity, had refused to visit him during his confinement in Newgate. There was, doubtless, a want of charity in their action, but there was also a want of honesty in his complaint. If he applied for their spiritual ministrations, they had considerable reason for treating his application as a piece of provoking effrontery, Though Defoe was in prison for this banter upon the High-fliers, it is a mistake to regard him as a martyr, except by accident, to the cause of Toleration as we understand it now, and as the Dissenters bore the brunt of the battle for it then. Before his trial and conviction, while he lay in prison, he issued an exposition of his views of a fair Toleration in a tract entitled *The Shortest Way to Peace and Union.* The Toleration which he advised, and which commended itself to the moderate Whigs with whom he had acted under King William and was probably acting now, was a purely spiritual Toleration. His proposal, in fact, was identical with that of Charles Leslie's in the *New Association*, one of the pamphlets which he professed to take off in his famous squib. Leslie had proposed that the Dissenters should be excluded from all civil employments, and should be forced to remain content with liberty of worship. Addressing the Dissenters, Defoe, in effect, urged them to anticipate forcible exclusion by voluntary withdrawal. Extremes on both sides should be industriously crushed and discouraged, and the extremes on the Dissenting side were those who, not being content to worship after their own fashion, had also a hankering after the public service. It is the true interest of the Dissenters in England, Defoe argued, to be governed by a Church of England magistracy; and with his usual paradoxical hardihood, he told his co-religionists bluntly that "the first reason of his proposition was that they were not qualified to be trusted with the government of themselves." When we consider the active part Defoe himself took in public affairs, we shall not be surprised that offence was given by his countenancing the civil disabilities of Dissenters, and that the Dissenting preachers declined to recognize him as properly belonging to their body. It was not, indeed, as a Dissenter that Defoe was prosecuted by the violent Tories then in power, but as the suspected literary instrument of the great Whig leaders.

This, of course, in no way diminishes the harsh and spiteful impolicy of the sentence passed on Defoe. Its terms were duly put in execution. The offending satirist stood in the pillory on the three last days of July, 1703, before the Royal Exchange in

Cornhill, near the Conduit in Cheapside, and at Temple Bar. It is incorrect, however, to say with Pope that

"Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe."

His ears were not cropped, as the barbarous phrase went, and he had no reason to he abashed. His reception by the mob was very different from that accorded to the anti-Jacobite Fuller, a scurrilous rogue who had tried to make a few pounds by a Plain Proof that the Chevalier was a suppositious child. The author of the *True-Born Englishman* was a popular favourite, and his exhibition in the pillory was an occasion of triumph and not of ignominy to him. A ring of admirers was formed round the place of punishment, and bunches of flowers instead of handfuls of garbage were thrown at the criminal. Tankards of ale and stoups of wine were drunk in his honour by the multitude whom he had delighted with his racy verse and charmed by his bold defiance of the authorities.

The enthusiasm was increased by the timely publication of a *Hymn to the Pillory*, in which Defoe boldly declared the iniquity of his sentence, and pointed out to the Government more proper objects of their severity. Atheists ought to stand there, he said, profligate beaux, swindling stock-jobbers, fanatic Jacobites, and the commanders who had brought the English fleet into disgrace. As for him, his only fault lay in his not being understood; but he was perhaps justly punished for being such a fool as to trust his meaning to irony. It would seem that though the Government had committed Defoe to Newgate, they did not dare, even before the manifestation of popular feeling in his favour, to treat him as a common prisoner. He not only had liberty to write, but he found means to convey his manuscripts to the printer. Of these privileges he had availed himself with that indomitable energy and fertility of resource which we find reason to admire at every stage in his career, and most of all now that he was in straits. In the short interval between his arrest and his conviction he carried on a vigorous warfare with both hands,—with one hand seeking to propitiate the Government, with the other attracting support outside among the people. He proved to the Government incontestably, by a collection of his writings, that he was a man of moderate views, who had no aversion in principle even to the proposals of the *New Association*. He proved the same thing to the people at large by publishing this *Collection of the writings of the author of the True-Born Englishman*, but he accompanied the proof by a lively appeal to their sympathy under the title of *More Reformation, a Satire on himself*, a lament over his own folly which was calculated to bring pressure on the Government against prosecuting a man so innocent of public wrong. When, in spite of his efforts, a conviction was recorded against him, he adopted a more defiant tone towards the Government. He wrote the *Hymn to the Pillory*. This daring effusion was hawked in the streets among the crowd that had assembled to witness his penance in the

"hieroglyphic State-machine,
Contrived to punish Fancy in."

"Come," he cried, in the concluding lines—

"Tell 'em the M—— that placed him here
Are Sc——ls to the times,
Are at a loss to find his guilt,
And can't commit his crimes."

"M——" stands for Men, and "Sc——ls" for Scandals. Defoe delighted in this odd use of methods of reserve, more common in his time than in ours.

The dauntless courage of Defoe's *Hymn to the Pillory* can only be properly appreciated when we remember with what savage outrage it was the custom of the mob to treat those who were thus exposed to make a London holiday. From the pillory he was taken back to Newgate, there to be imprisoned during her Majesty's pleasure. His confinement must have been much less disagreeable to him than it would have been to one of less hardy temperament. Defoe was not the man to shrink with loathing from the companionship of thieves, highwaymen, forgers, coiners, and pirates. Curiosity was a much stronger power with him than disgust. Newgate had something of the charm for Defoe that a hospital full of hideous diseases has for an enthusiastic surgeon. He spent many pleasant hours in listening to the tales of his adventurous fellow-prisoners. Besides, the Government did not dare to deprive him of the liberty of writing and publishing. This privilege enabled him to appeal to the public, whose ear he had gained in the character of an undismayed martyr, an enjoyment which to so buoyant a man must have compensated for a great deal of irksome suffering. He attributed the failure of his pantile works at Tilbury to his removal from the management of them; but bearing in mind the amount of success that had attended his efforts when he was free, it is fair to suppose that he was not altogether sorry for the excuse. It was by no means the intention of his High-Church persecutors that Defoe should enjoy himself in Newgate, and he himself lamented loudly the strange reverse by which he had passed within a few months from the closet of a king to a prisoner's cell; but on the whole he was probably as happy in Newgate as he had been at Whitehall. His wife and six children were most to be commiserated, and their distress was his heaviest trial.

The first use which Defoe made of his pen after his exhibition in the pillory was to reply to a Dissenting minister who had justified the practice of occasional conformity. He thereby marked once more his separation from the extreme Dissenters, who were struggling against having their religion made a disqualification for offices of public trust. But in the changes of parties at Court he soon found a reason for marking his separation from the opposite extreme, and facing the other way. Under the influence of the

moderate Tories, Marlborough, Godolphin, and their invaluable ally, the Duchess, the Queen was gradually losing faith in the violent Tories. According to Swift, she began to dislike her bosom friend, Mrs. Freeman, from the moment of her accession, but though she may have chafed under the yoke of her favourite, she could not at once shake off the domination of that imperious will. The Duchess, finding the extreme Tories unfavourable to the war in which her husband's honour and interests were deeply engaged, became a hot partisan against them, and used all their blunders to break down their power at Court. Day by day she impressed upon the Queen the necessity of peace and union at home in the face of the troubles abroad. The moderate men of both parties must be rallied round the throne. Extremes on both sides must be discouraged. Spies were set to work to take note of such rash expressions among "the hot and angry men" as would be likely to damage them in the Queen's favour. Queen Anne had not a little of the quiet tenacity and spitefulness of enfeebled constitutions, but in the end reason prevailed, resentment at importunity was overcome, and the hold of the High-Churchmen on her affections gave way.

Nobody, Swift has told us, could better disguise her feelings than the Queen. The first intimation which the High-Church party had of her change of views was her opening speech to Parliament on the 9th November, 1703, in which she earnestly desired parties in both Houses to avoid heats and divisions. Defoe at once threw himself in front of the rising tide. Whether he divined for himself that the influence of the Earl of Nottingham, the Secretary of State, to whom he owed his prosecution and imprisonment, was waning, or obtained a hint to that effect from his Whig friends, we do not know, but he lost no time in issuing from his prison a bold attack upon the High-Churchmen. In his *Challenge of Peace, addressed to the whole Nation*, he denounced them as Church Vultures and Ecclesiastical Harpies. It was they and not the Dissenters that were the prime movers of strife and dissension. How are peace and union to be obtained, he asks. He will show people first how peace and union cannot be obtained.

"First, Sacheverell's Bloody Flag of Defiance is not the way to Peace and Union. *The shortest way to destroy is not the shortest way to unite.* Persecution, Laws to compel, restrain or force the Conscience of one another, is not the way to this Union, which her Majesty has so earnestly recommended.

"Secondly, to repeal or contract the late Act of Toleration is not the way for this so much wished-for happiness; to have laws revived that should set one party a plundering, excommunicating and unchurching another, that should renew the oppressions and devastations of late reigns, this will not by any means contribute to this Peace, which all good men desire.

"New associations and proposals to divest men of their freehold right for differences in opinion, and take away the right of Dissenters voting in elections of Members; this is not the way to Peace and Union.

"Railing pamphlets, buffooning our brethren as a party to be suppressed, and dressing them up in the Bear's skin for all the dogs in the street to bait them, is not the way to Peace and Union.

"Railing sermons, exciting people to hatred and contempt of their brethren, because they differ in opinions, is not the way to Peace and Union.

"Shutting all people out of employment and the service of their Prince and Country, unless they can comply with indifferent ceremonies of religion, is far from the way to Peace and Union.

"Reproaching the Succession settled by Parliament, and reviving the abdicated title of the late King James, and his supposed family, cannot tend to this Peace and Union.

"Laws against Occasional Conformity, and compelling people who bear offices to a total conformity, and yet force them to take and serve in those public employments, cannot contribute to this Peace and Union."

In this passage Defoe seems to ally himself more closely with his Dissenting brethren than he had done before. It was difficult for him, with his published views on the objectionableness of occasional conformity, and the propriety of Dissenters leaving the magistracy in the hands of the Church, to maintain his new position without incurring the charge of inconsistency. The charge was freely made, and his own writings were collected as a testimony against him, but he met the charge boldly. The Dissenters ought not to practise occasional conformity, but if they could reconcile it with their consciences, they ought not to receive temporal punishment for practising it. The Dissenters ought to withdraw from the magistracy, but it was persecution to exclude them. In tract after tract of brilliant and trenchant argument, he upheld these views, with his usual courage attacking most fiercely those antagonists who went most nearly on the lines of his own previous writings. Ignoring what he had said before, he now proved clearly that the Occasional Conformity Bill was a breach of the Act of Toleration. There was little difference between his own *Shortest Way to Peace and Union* and Sir Humphrey Mackworth's *Peace at Home*, but he assailed the latter pamphlet vigorously, and showed that it had been the practice in all countries for Dissenters from the established religion to have a share in the business of the State. At the same time he never departed so far from the "moderate" point of view, as to insist that Dissenters ought to be admitted to a share in the business of the State. Let the High-Church ministers be dismissed, and moderate men summoned to the Queen's councils, and the Dissenters would have every reason to be content. They would acquiesce with pleasure in a ministry and magistracy of Low-Churchmen.

Defoe's assaults upon the High-Church Tories were neither interdicted nor resented by the Government, though he lay in prison at their mercy. Throughout the winter of 1703–4 the extreme members of the Ministry, though they had still a majority in the House of Commons, felt the Queen's coldness increase. Their former high place in her regard and their continued hold upon Par-

liament tempted them to assume airs of independence which gave deeper offence than her unruffled courtesy led either them or their rivals to suspect. At last the crisis came. The Earl of Nottingham took the rash step of threatening to resign unless the Whig Dukes of Somerset and Devonshire were dismissed from the Cabinet. To his surprise and chagrin, his resignation was accepted (1704), and two more of his party were dismissed from office at the same time.

The successor of Nottingham was Robert Harley, afterwards created Earl of Oxford and Mortimer. He gave evidence late in life of his love for literature by forming the collection of manuscripts known as the Harleian, and we know from Swift that he was deeply impressed with the importance of having allies in the Press. He entered upon office in May, 1704, and one of his first acts was to convey to Defoe the message, "Pray ask that gentleman what I can do for him." Defoe replied by likening himself to the blind man in the parable, and paraphrasing his prayer, "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" He would not seem to have obtained his liberty immediately, but, through Harley's influence, he was set free towards the end of July or the beginning of August. The Queen also, he afterwards said, "was pleased particularly to inquire into his circumstances and family, and by Lord Treasurer Godolphin to send a considerable supply to his wife and family, and to send him to the prison money to pay his fine and the expenses of his discharge."

On what condition was Defoe released? On condition, according to the *Elegy on the Author of the True-Born Englishman*, which he published immediately after his discharge, that he should keep silence for seven years, or at least "not write what some people might not like." To the public he represented himself as a martyr grudgingly released by the Government, and restrained from attacking them only by his own bond and the fear of legal penalties.

> "Memento Mori here I stand,
> With silent lips but speaking hand;
> A walking shadow of a Poet,
> But bound to hold my tongue and never show it.
> A monument of injury,
> A sacrifice to legal t(yrann)y."

"For shame, gentlemen," he humourously cries to his enemies, "do not strike a dead man; beware, scribblers, of fathering your pasquinades against authority upon me; for seven years the True-Born Englishman is tied under sureties and penalties not to write.

> "To seven long years of silence I betake,
> Perhaps by then I may forget to speak."

This elegy he has been permitted to publish as his last speech and dying confession—

"When malefactors come to die
They claim uncommon liberty:
Freedom of speech gives no distaste,
They let them talk at large, because they talk their last."

The public could hardly have supposed from this what Defoe afterwards admitted to have been the true state of the case, namely, that on leaving prison he was taken into the service of the Government. He obtained an appointment, that is to say a pension, from the Queen, and was employed on secret services. When charged afterwards with having written by Harley's instructions, he denied this, but admitted the existence of certain "capitulations," in which he stipulated for liberty to write according to his own judgment, guided only by a sense of gratitude to his benefactor. There is reason to believe that even this is not the whole truth. Documents which Mr. Lee recently brought to light make one suspect that Defoe was all the time in private relations with the leaders of the Whig party. Of this more falls to be said in another place. The True-Born Englishman was, indeed, dead. Defoe was no longer the straightforward advocate of King William's policy. He was engaged henceforward in serving two masters, persuading each that he served him alone, and persuading the public, in spite of numberless insinuations, that he served nobody but them and himself, and wrote simply as a free lance under the jealous sufferance of the Government of the day.

I must reserve for a separate chapter some account of Defoe's greatest political work, which he began while he still lay at Newgate, the *Review*. Another work which he wrote and published at the same period deserves attention on different grounds. His history of the great storm of November, 1703, *A Collection of the most remarkable Casualties and Disasters which happened in the late Dreadful Tempest, both by Sea and Land*, may be set down as the first of his works of invention. It is a most minute and circumstantial record, containing many letters from eye-witnesses of what happened in their immediate neighbourhood. Defoe could have seen little of the storm himself from the interior of Newgate, but it is possible that the letters are genuine, and that he compiled other details from published accounts. Still, we are justified in suspecting that his annals of the storm are no more authentic history than his *Journal of the Plague*, or his *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, and that for many of the incidents he is equally indebted to his imagination.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REVIEW OF THE AFFAIRS OF FRANCE.

It was a bold undertaking for a prisoner in Newgate to engage to furnish a newspaper written wholly by himself, "purged from the errors and partiality of news-writers and petty statesmen of all sides." It would, of course, have been an impossible undertaking if the *Review* had been, either in size or in contents, like a newspaper of the present time. The *Review* was, in its first stage, a sheet of eight small quarto pages. After the first two numbers, it was reduced in size to four pages, but a smaller type was used, so that the amount of matter remained nearly the same—about equal in bulk to two modern leading articles. At first the issue was weekly; after four numbers it became bi-weekly, and so remained for a year.

For the character of the *Review* it is difficult to find a parallel. There was nothing like it at the time, and nothing exactly like it has been attempted since. The nearest approach to it among its predecessors was the *Observator*, a small weekly journal written by the erratic John Tutchin, in which passing topics, political and social, were discussed in dialogues. Personal scandals were a prominent feature in the *Observator*. Defoe was not insensible to the value of this element to a popular journal. He knew, he said, that people liked to be amused; and he supplied this want in a section of his paper entitled "Mercure Scandale; or, Advice from the Scandalous Club, being a weekly history of Nonsense, Impertinence, Vice, and Debauchery." Under this attractive heading, Defoe noticed current scandals, his club being represented as a tribunal before which offenders were brought, their cases heard, and sentence passed upon them. Slanderers of the True-Born Englishman frequently figure in its proceedings. It was in this section also that Defoe exposed the errors of contemporary news-writers, the *Post-man*, the *Post-Boy*, the *London Post*, the *Flying Post*, and the *Daily Courant*. He could not in his prison pretend to superior information regarding the events of the day; the errors which he exposed were chiefly blunders in geography and history. The Mercure Scandale was avowedly intended to amuse the frivolous. The lapse of time has made its artificial sprightliness dreary. It was in the serious portion of the *Review*, the Review proper,

that Defoe showed most of his genius. The design of this was nothing less than to give a true picture, drawn with "an impartial and exact historical pen," of the domestic and foreign affairs of all the States of Europe. It was essential, he thought, that at such a time of commotion Englishmen should be thoroughly informed of the strength and the political interests and proclivities of the various European Powers. He could not undertake to tell his readers what was passing from day to day, but he could explain to them the policy of the Continental Courts; he could show how that policy was affected by their past history and present interests; he could calculate the forces at their disposal, set forth the grounds of their alliances, and generally put people in a position to follow the great game that was being played on the European chess-board. In the *Review*, in fact, as he himself described his task, he was writing a history sheet by sheet, and letting the world see it as it went on.

This excellent plan of instruction was carried out with incomparable brilliancy of method, and vivacity of style. Defoe was thoroughly master of his subject; he had read every history that he could lay his hands on, and his connexion with King William had guided him to the mainsprings of political action, and fixed in his mind clear principles for England's foreign policy. Such a mass of facts and such a maze of interests would have encumbered and perplexed a more commonplace intellect, but Defoe handled them with experienced and buoyant ease. He had many arts for exciting attention. His confinement in Newgate, from which the first number of the *Review* was issued on the 19th February, 1704, had in no way impaired his clear-sighted daring and self-confident skill. There was a sparkle of paradox and a significant lesson in the very title of his journal—*A Review of the Affairs of France.* When, by and by, he digressed to the affairs of Sweden and Poland, and filled number after number with the history of Hungary, people kept asking, "What has this to do with France?" "How little you understand my design," was Defoe's retort. "Patience till my work is completed, and then you will see that, however much I may seem to have been digressing, I have always kept strictly to the point. Do not judge me as you judged St. Paul's before the roof was put on. It is not affairs *in* France that I have undertaken to explain, but the affairs *of* France; and the affairs of France are the affairs of Europe. So great is the power of the French money, the artifice of their conduct, the terror of their arms, that they can bring the greatest kings in Europe to promote their interest and grandeur at the expense of their own."

Defoe delighted to brave common prejudice by throwing full in its face paradoxes expressed in the most unqualified language. While we were at war with France, and commonplace hunters after popularity were doing their utmost to flatter the national vanity, Defoe boldly announced his intention of setting forth the wonderful greatness of the French nation, the enormous numbers of their armies, the immense wealth of their treasury, the marvellous vigour

of their administration. He ridiculed loudly those writers who pretended that we should have no difficulty in beating them, and filled their papers with dismal stories about the poverty and depopulation of the country. "Consider the armies that the French King has raised," cried Defoe, "and the reinforcements and subsidies he has sent to the King of Spain; does that look like a depopulated country and an impoverished exchequer?" It was perhaps a melancholy fact, but what need to apologise for telling the truth? At once, of course, a shout was raised against him for want of patriotism; he was a French pensioner, a Jacobite, a hireling of the Peace-party. This was the opportunity on which the chuckling paradox-monger had counted. He protested that he was not drawing a map of the French power to terrify the English. But, he said, "there are two cheats equally hurtful to us; the first to terrify us, the last to make us too easy and consequently too secure; 'tis equally dangerous for us to be terrified into despair and bullied into more terror of our enemies than we need, or to be so exalted in conceit of our own force as to undervalue and contemn the power which we cannot reduce." To blame him for making clear the greatness of the French power, was to act as if the Romans had killed the geese in the Capitol for frightening them out of their sleep. "If I, like an honest Protestant goose, have gaggled too loud of the French power, and raised the country, the French indeed may have reason to cut my throat if they could; but 'tis hard my own countrymen, to whom I have shown their danger, and whom I have endeavoured to wake out of their sleep, should take offence at the timely discovery."

If we open the first volume, or indeed any volume of the *Review*, at random, we are almost certain to meet with some electric shock of paradox designed to arouse the attention of the torpid. In one number we find the writer, ever daring and alert, setting out with an eulogium on "the wonderful benefit of arbitrary power" in France. He runs on in this vein for some time, accumulating examples of the wonderful benefit, till the patience of his liberty-loving readers is sufficiently exasperated, and then he turns round with a grin of mockery and explains that he means benefit to the monarch, not to the subject. "If any man ask me what are the benefits of arbitrary power to the subject, I answer these two, *poverty* and *subjection*." But to an ambitious monarch unlimited power is a necessity; unless he can count upon instant obedience to his will, he only courts defeat if he embarks in schemes of aggression and conquest.

"When a Prince must court his subjects to give him leave to raise an army, and when that's done, tell him when he must disband them; that if he wants money, he must assemble the States of his country, and not only give them good words to get it, and tell them what 'tis for, but give them an account how it is expended before he asks for more. The subjects in such a government are certainly happy in having their property and privileges secured, but if I were of his Privy Council, I would advise such a Prince to content himself within the compass of his own government, and

never think of invading his neighbours or increasing his dominions, for subjects who stipulate with their Princes, and make conditions of government, who claim to be governed by laws and make those laws themselves, who need not pay their money but when they see cause, and may refuse to pay it when demanded without their consent; such subjects will never empty their purses upon foreign wars for enlarging the glory of their sovereign."

This glory he describes as "the leaf-gold which the devil has laid over the backside of ambition, to make it glitter to the world."

Defoe's knowledge of the irritation caused among the Dissenters by his *Shortest Way*, did not prevent him from shocking them and annoying the high Tories by similar *jeux d'esprit.* He had no tenderness for the feelings of such of his brethren as had not his own robust sense of humour and boyish glee in the free handling of dangerous weapons. Thus we find him, among his eulogies of the Grand Monarque, particularly extolling him for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. By the expulsion of the Protestants, Louis impoverished and unpeopled part of his country, but it was "the most politic action the French King ever did." "I don't think fit to engage here in a dispute about the honesty of it," says Defoe; "but till he had first cleared the country of that numerous injured people, he could never have ventured to carry an offensive war into all the borders of Europe." And Defoe was not content with shocking the feelings of his nominal co-religionists by a light treatment of matters in which he agreed with them. He upheld with all his might the opposite view from theirs on two important questions of foreign policy. While the Confederates were doing battle on all sides against France, the King of Sweden was making war on his own account against Poland for the avowed purpose of placing a Protestant prince on the throne. Extreme Protestants in England were disposed to think that Charles XII. was fighting the Lord's battle in Poland. But Defoe was strongly of opinion that the work in which all Protestants ought at that moment to be engaged was breaking down the power of France, and as Charles refused to join the Confederacy, and the Catholic prince against whom he was fighting was a possible adherent, the ardent preacher of union among the Protestant powers insisted upon regarding him as a practical ally of France, and urged that the English fleet should be sent into the Baltic to interrupt his communications. Disunion among Protestants, argued Defoe, was the main cause of French greatness; if the Swedish King would not join the Confederacy of his own free will, he should be compelled to join it, or at least to refrain from weakening it.

Defoe treated the revolt of the Hungarians against the Emperor with the same regard to the interests of the Protestant cause. Some uneasiness was felt in England at co-operating with an ally who so cruelly oppressed his Protestant subjects, and some scruple of conscience at seeming to countenance the oppression. Defoe fully admitted the wrongs of the Hungarians, but argued that this was not the time for them to press their claims for redress. He

would not allow that they were justified at such a moment in calling in the aid of the Turks against the Emperor. "It is not enough that a nation be Protestant and the people our friends; if they will join with our enemies, they are Papists, Turks, and Heathens, to us." "If the Protestants in Hungary will make the Protestant religion in Hungary clash with the Protestant religion in all the rest of Europe, we must prefer the major interest to the minor." Defoe treats every foreign question from the cool high-political point of view, generally taking up a position from which he can expose the unreasonableness of both sides. In the case of the Cevennois insurgents, one party had used the argument that it was unlawful to encourage rebellion even among the subjects of a prince with whom we were at war. With this Defoe dealt in one article, proving with quite a superfluity of illustration that we were justified by all the precedents of recent history in sending support to the rebellious subjects of Louis XIV. It was the general custom of Europe to "assist the malcontents of our neighbours." Then in another article he considered whether, being lawful, it was also expedient, and he answered this in the negative, treating with scorn a passionate appeal for the Cevennois entitled "Europe enslaved if the Camisars are not relieved." "What nonsense is this," he cried, "about a poor despicable handful of men who have only made a little diversion in the great war!" "The haste these men are in to have that done which they cannot show us the way to do!" he cried; and proceeded to prove in a minute discussion of conceivable strategic movements that it was impossible for us in the circumstances to send the Camisards the least relief.

There is no reference in the *Review* to Defoe's release from prison. Two numbers a week were issued with the same punctuality before and after, and there is no perceptible difference either in tone or in plan. Before he left prison, and before the fall of the high Tory Ministers, he had thrown in his lot boldly with the moderate men, and he did not identify himself more closely with any political section after Harley and Godolphin recognized the value of his support and gave him liberty and pecuniary help. In the first number of the *Review* he had declared his freedom from party ties, and his unreserved adherence to truth and the public interest, and he made frequent protestation of this independence. "I am not a party man," he kept saying; "at least, I resolve this shall not be a party paper." In discussing the affairs of France, he took more than one side-glance homewards, but always with the protest that he had no interest to serve but that of his country. The absolute power of Louis, for example, furnished him with an occasion for lamenting the disunited counsels of Her Majesty's Cabinet. Without imitating the despotic form of the French Government, he said, there are ways by which we might secure under our own forms greater decision and promptitude on the part of the Executive. When Nottingham was dismissed, he rejoiced openly, not because the ex-Secretary had been his persecutor, but because at last there was unity of views among the Queen's Ministers. He

joined naturally in the exultation over Marlborough's successes, but in the *Review*, and in his *Hymn to Victory*, separately published, he courteously diverted some part of the credit to the new Ministry. "Her Majesty's measures, moved by new and polished councils have been pointed more directly at the root of the French power than ever we have seen before. I hope no man will suppose I reflect on the memory of King William; I know 'tis impossible the Queen should more sincerely wish the reduction of France than his late Majesty; but if it is expected I should say he was not worse served, oftener betrayed, and consequently hurried into more mistakes and disasters, than her Majesty now is, this must be by somebody who believes I know much less of the public matters of those days than I had the honour to be informed of." But this praise, he represented, was not the praise of a partisan; it was an honest compliment wrung from a man whose only connexion with the Government was a bond for his good behaviour, an undertaking "not to write what some people might not like."

Defoe's hand being against every member of the writing brotherhood, it was natural that his reviews should not pass without severe criticisms. He often complained of the insults, ribaldry, Billingsgate, and Bear-garden language to which he was exposed; and some of his biographers have taken these lamentations seriously, and expressed their regret that so good a man should have been so much persecuted. But as he deliberately provoked these assaults, and never missed a chance of effective retort, it is difficult to sympathise with him on any ground but his manifest delight in the strife of tongues. Infinitely the superior of his antagonists in power, he could affect to treat them with good humour, but this good humour was not easy to reciprocate when combined with an imperturbable assumption that they were all fools or knaves. When we find him, after humbly asking pardon for all his errors of the press, errors of the pen, or errors of opinion, expressing a wish that "all gentlemen on the other side would give him equal occasion to honour them for their charity, temper, and gentlemanlike dealing, as for their learning and virtue," and offering to "capitulate with them, and enter into a treaty or cartel for exchange of good language," we may, if we like, admire his superior mastery of the weapons of irritation, but pity is out of place.

The number of February 17, 1705, was announced by Defoe as being "the last Review of this volume, and designed to be so of this work." But on the following Tuesday, the regular day for the appearance of the *Review*, he issued another number, declaring that he could not quit the volume without some remarks on "charity and poverty." On Saturday yet another last number appeared, dealing with some social subjects which he had been urged by correspondents to discuss. Then on Tuesday, February 27, apologising for the frequent turning of his design, he issued a Preface to a new volume of the *Review*, with a slight change of title. He would overtake sooner or later all the particulars of French greatness which he had promised to survey, but as the course of his nar-

rative had brought him to England, and he might stay there for some time, it was as well that this should be indicated in the title, which was henceforth to be A Review of the Affairs of France, with Observations on Affairs at Home. He had intended, he said, to abandon the work altogether, but some gentlemen had prevailed with him to go on, and had promised that he should not be at a loss by it. It was now to be issued three times a week.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE AND UNION.

In putting forth the prospectus of the second volume of his *Review*, Defoe intimated that its prevailing topic would be the Trade of England—a vast subject, with many branches, all closely interwoven with one another and with the general well-being of the kingdom. It grieved him, he said, to see the nation involved in such evils while remedies lay at hand which blind guides could not, and wicked guides would not, see—trade decaying, yet within reach of the greatest improvements, the navy flourishing, yet fearfully mismanaged, rival factions brawling and fighting when they ought to combine for the common good. "Nothing could have induced him to undertake the ungrateful office of exposing these things, but the full persuasion that he was capable of convincing anything of an Englishman that had the least angle of his soul untainted with partiality, and that had the least concern left for the good of his country, that even the worst of these evils were easy to be cured; that if ever this nation were shipwrecked and undone, it must be at the very entrance of her port of deliverance, in the sight of her safety that Providence held out to her, in the sight of her safe establishment, a prosperous trade, a regular, easily supplied navy, and a general reformation both in manners and methods in Church and State."

Defoe began as usual by laying down various clear heads, under which he promised to deal with the whole field of trade. But as usual he did not adhere to this systematic plan. He discussed some topics of the day with brillant force, and then he suddenly digressed to a subject only collaterally connected with trade. The Queen, in opening the session of 1704–5, had exhorted her Parliament to peace and union; but the High-Churchmen were too hot to listen to advice even from her. The Occasional Conformity Bill was again introduced and carried in the Commons. The Lords rejected it. The Common persisted. and to secure the passing of the measure, tacked it to a Bill of Supply. The Lords refused to pass the Money Bill till the tack was withdrawn. Soon afterwards the Parliament—Parliaments were then triennial—was dissolved, and the canvass for a general election set in amidst unusual excitement. Defoe abandoned the quiet topic of trade, and devoted the *Review* to electioneering articles.

But he did not take a side, at least not a party side. He took the side of peace and his country. "I saw with concern," he said, in afterwards explaining his position, "the weighty juncture of a new election for members approach, the variety of wheels and engines see to work in the nation, and the furious methods to form interests on either hand and put the temper of men on all sides into an unusual motion; and things seemed acted with so much animosity and party fury that I confess it gave me terrible apprehensions of the consequences." On both sides "the methods seemed to him very scandalous." "In many places most horrid and villainous practices were set on foot to supplant one another. The parties stooped to vile and unbecoming meannesses; infinite briberies, forgeries, perjuries, and all manner of debauchings of the principles and manners of the electors were attempted. All sorts of violences, tumults, riots, breaches of the peace, neighbourhood, and good manners were made use of to support interests and carry elections." In short, Defoe saw the nation "running directly on the steep precipice of confusion." In these circumstances, he seriously reflected what he should do. He came to the conclusion that he must "immediately set himself in the *Review* to exhort, persuade, entreat, and in the most moving terms he was capable of, prevail on all people in general to STUDY PEACE."

Under cover of this profession of impartiality, Defoe issued most effective attacks upon the High-Church party. In order to promote peace, he said, it was necessary to ascertain first of all who were the enemies of peace. On the surface, the questions at stake in the elections were the privileges of the Dissenters and the respective rights of the Lords and the Commons in the matter of Money Bills. But people must look beneath the surface. "King James, French power, and a general turn of affairs was at the bottom, and the quarrels between Church and Dissenters only a politic noose they had hooked the parties on both sides into." Defoe lashed the Tackers into fury by his exhortations to the study of peace. He professed the utmost good-will to them personally, though he had not words strong enough to condemn their conduct in tacking the Occasional Bill to a Money Bill when they knew that the Lords would reject it, and so in a moment of grave national peril leave the army without supplies. The Queen in dissolving Parliament, had described this tacking as a dangerous experiment, and Defoe explained the experiment as being "whether losing the Money Bill, breaking up the Houses, disbanding the Confederacy, and opening the door to the French, might not have been for the interest of the High-Church." Far be it from him to use Billingsgate language to the Tackers, but "the effect of their action, which, and not their motive, he had to consider, would undoubtedly be to let in the French, depose the Queen, bring in the Prince of Wales, abdicate the Protestant religion, restore Popery, repeal the Toleration, and persecute the Dissenters." Still it was probable that the Tackers meant no harm. *Humanum est errare.* He was certain that if he showed them their error, they would re-

pent and be converted. All the same, he could not recommend them to the electors. "A Tacker is a man of passion, a man of heat, a man that is for ruining the nation upon any hazards to obtain his ends. Gentlemen freeholders, you must not choose a Tacker, unless you will destroy our peace, divide our strength, pull down the Church, let in the French, and depose the Queen."

From the dissolution of Parliament in April till the end of the year Defoe preached from this text with infinite variety and vigour. It is the chief subject of the second volume of the *Review*. The elections, powerfully influenced by Marlborough's successes as well as by the eloquent championship of Defoe, resulted in the entire defeat of the High Tories, and a further weeding of them out of high places in the Administration. Defoe was able to close this volume of the *Review* with expressions of delight at the attainment of the peace for which he had laboured, and, the victory being gained and the battle over, to promise a return to the intermitted subject of Trade. He returned to this subject in the beginning of his third volume. But he had not pursued it long when he was again called away. The second diversion, as he pointed out, was strictly analogous to the first. It was a summons to him to do his utmost to promote the union of the two kingdoms of England and Scotland. "From the same zeal," Defoe said, "with which I first pursued this blessed subject of peace, I found myself embarked in the further extent of it, I mean the Union. If I thought myself obliged in duty to the public interest to use my utmost endeavour to quiet the minds of enraged parties, I found myself under a stronger necessity to embark in the same design between two most enraged nations."

The union of the two kingdoms had become an object of pressing and paramount importance towards the close of William's reign. He had found little difficulty in getting the English Parliament to agree to settle the succession of the House of Hanover, but the proposal that the succession to the throne of Scotland should be settled on the same head was coldly received by the Scottish Parliament. It was not so much that the politicians of Edinburgh were averse to a common settlement, or positively eager for a King and Court of their own, but they were resolved to hold back till they were assured of commercial privileges which would go to compensate them for the drain of wealth that was supposed to have followed the King southwards. This was the policy of the wiser heads, not to accept the Union without as advantageous terms as they could secure. They had lost an opportunity at the Revolution, and were determined not to lose another. But among the mass of the population the feeling was all in favour of a separate kingdom. National animosity had been inflamed to a passionate pitch by the Darien disaster and the Massacre of Glencoe. The people listened readily to the insinuations of hot-headed men that the English wished to have everything their own way. The counter-charge about the Scotch found equally willing hearers among the mass in England. Never had cool-headed statesmen a

harder task in preventing two nations from coming to blows. All the time that the Treaty of Union was being negotiated which King William had earnestly urged from his deathbed, throughout the first half of Queen Anne's reign they worked under a continual apprehension lest the negotiations should end in a violent and irreconcilable rupture.

Defoe might well say that he was pursuing the same blessed subject of Peace in trying to reconcile these two most enraged nations, and writing with all his might for the Union. An Act enabling the Queen to appoint Commissioners on the English side to arrange the terms of the Treaty had been passed in the first year of her reign, but difficulties had arisen about the appointment of the Scottish Commissioners, and it was not till the Spring of 1706 that the two Commissions came together. When they did at last meet, they found each other much more reasonable and practical in spirit than had appeared possible during the battle over the preliminaries. But while the statesmen sat concocting the terms of the Treaty almost amicably, from April to July, the excitement raged fiercely out of doors. Amidst the blaze of recriminations and counter-recriminations, Defoe moved energetically as the Apostle of Peace, making his *Review* play like a fireman's hose upon the flames. He did not try to persuade the Scotch to peace by the same methods which he had used in the case of the High-fliers and Tackers. His Reviews on this subject, full of spirit as ever, are models of the art of conciliation. He wrestled ardently with national prejudices on both sides, vindicating the Scottish Presbyterians from the charge of religious intolerance, labouring to prove that the English were not all to blame for the collapse of the Darien expedition and the Glencoe tragedy, expounding what was fair to both nations in matters concerning trade. Abuse was heaped upon him plentifully by hot partisans; he was charged with want of patriotism from the one side, and with too much of it from the other; but he held on his way manfully, allowing no blow from his aspersers to pass unreturned. Seldom has so bold and skilful a soldier been enlisted in the cause of peace.

Defoe was not content with the *Review* as a literary instrument of pacification. He carried on the war in both capitals, answering the pamphlets of the Scotch patriots with counter-pamphlets from the Edinburgh press. He published also a poem, "in honour of Scotland," entitled *Caledonia*, with an artfully flattering preface, in which he declared the poem to be a simple tribute to the greatness of the people and the country without any reference whatever to the Union. Presently he found it expedient to make Edinburgh his head-quarters, though he continued sending the *Review* three times a week to his London printer. When the Treaty of Union had been elaborated by the Commissioners and had passed the English Parliament, its difficulties were not at an end. It had still to pass the Scotch Parliament, and a strong faction there, riding on the storm of popular excitement, insisted on discussing it clause by clause. Moved partly by curiosity, partly by earnest

desire for the public good, according to his own account in the *Review* and in his *History of the Union*, Defoe resolved to undertake the "long, tedious, and hazardous journey" to Edinburgh, and use all his influence to push the Treaty through. It was a task of no small danger, for the prejudice against the Union went so high in the Scottish capital that he ran the risk of being torn to pieces by the populace. In one riot of which he gives an account, his lodging was beset, and for a time he was in as much peril "as a grenadier on a counter-scarp." Still he went on writing pamphlets, and lobbying members of Parliament. Owing to his intimate knowledge of all matters relating to trade, he also "had the honour to be frequently sent for into the several Committees of Parliament which were appointed to state some difficult points relating to equalities, taxes, prohibitions, &c." Even when the Union was agreed to by the Parliaments of both kingdoms, and took effect formally in May, 1707, difficulties arose in putting the details in operation, and Defoe prolonged his stay in Scotland through the whole of that year.

In this visit to Scotland Defoe protested to the world at the time that he had gone as a diplomatist on his own account, purely in the interests of peace. But a suspicion arose and was very free expressed, that both in this journey and in previous journeys to the West and the North of England during the elections, he was serving as the agent, if not as the spy, of the Government. These reproaches he denied with indignation, declaring it particularly hard that he should be subjected to such despiteful and injurious treatment even by writers "embarked in the same cause, and pretending to write for the same public good." "I contemn," he said in his *History*, "as not worth mentioning, the suggestions of some people, of my being employed thither to carry on the interest of a party. I have never loved any parties, but with my utmost zeal have sincerely espoused the great and original interest of this nation, and all nations—I mean truth and liberty,—and whoever are of that party, I desire to be with them." He took up the same charges more passionately in the Preface to the third volume of the *Review*, and dealt with them in some brilliant passages of apologetic eloquence.

"I must confess," he said, "I have sometimes thought it very hard, that having voluntarily, without the least direction, assistance, or encouragement, in spite of all that has been suggested, taken upon me the most necessary work of removing national prejudices against the two most capital blessings of the world, Peace and Union, I should have the disaster to have the nations receive the doctrine and damn the teacher.

"Should I descend to particulars, it would hardly appear credible that in a Christian, a Protestant, and a Reformed nation, any man should receive such treatment as I have done, even from those very people whose consciences and judgments have stooped to the venerable truth, owned it has been useful, serviceable, and seasonable. . . .

"I am charged with partiality, bribery, pensions, and payments—a thing the circumstances, family, and fortunes of a man devoted to his

country's peace clears me of. If paid, gentlemen, for writing, if hired, if employed, why still harassed with merciless and malicious men, why pursued to all extremities by law for old accounts, which you clear other men of every day? Why oppressed, distressed, and driven from his family and from all his prospects of delivering them or himself? Is this the fate of men employed and hired? Is this the figure the agents of Courts and Princes make? Certainly had I been hired or employed, those people who own the service would by this time have set their servant free from the little and implacable malice of litigious persecutions, murthering warrants, and men whose mouths are to be stopt by trifles. Let this suffice to clear me of all the little and scandalous charges of being hired and employed."

But then, people ask, if he was not officially employed, what had he to do with these affairs? Why should he meddle with them? To this he answers:—

"Truly, gentlemen, this is just the case. I saw a parcel of people caballing together to ruin property, corrupt the laws, invade the Government, debauch the people, and in short, enslave and embroil the nation, and I cried 'Fire!' or rather I cried 'Water!' for the fire was begun already. I see all the nation running into confusions and directly flying in the face of one another, and cried out 'Peace!' I called upon all sorts of people that had any senses to collect them together and judge for themselves what they were going to do, and excited them to lay hold of the madmen and take from them the wicked weapon, the knife with which they were going to destroy their mother, rip up the bowels of their country, and at last effectually ruin themselves.

"And what had I to do with this? Why, yes, gentlemen, I had the same right as every man that has a footing in his country, or that has a posterity to possess liberty and claim right, must have, to preserve the laws, liberty, and government of that country to which he belongs, and he that charges me with meddling in what does not concern me, meddles himself with what 'tis plain he does not understand."

"I am not the first," Defoe said in another place, "that has been stoned for saying the truth. I cannot but think that as time and the conviction of their senses will restore men to love the peace now established in this nation, so they will gradually see I have acted no part but that of a lover of my country, and an honest man."

Time has undeniably shown that in these efforts to promote party peace and national union Defoe acted like a lover of his country, and that his aims were the aims of a statesmanlike as well as an honest man. And yet his protestations of independence and spontaneity of action, with all their ring of truth and all their solemnity of asseveration, were merely diplomatic blinds. He was all the time, as he afterwards admitted, when the admission could do no harm except to his own passing veracity, acting as the agent of Harley, and in enjoyment of an "appointment" from the Queen. What exactly the nature of his secret services in Scotland and elsewhere were, he very properly refused to reveal. His business probably was to ascertain and report the opinions of influential

persons, and keep the Government informed as far as he could of the general state of feeling. At any rate it was not as he alleged, mere curiosity, or the fear of his creditors, or private enterprise, or pure and simple patriotic zeal that took Defoe to Scotland. The use he made of his debts as diplomatic instruments is curious. He not merely practised his faculties in the management of his creditors, which one of Lord Beaconsfield's characters commends as an incomparable means to a sound knowledge of human nature; but he made his debts actual pieces in his political game. His poverty, apparent, if not real, served as a screen for his employment under Government. When he was despatched on secret missions, he could depart wiping his eyes at the hardship of having to flee from his creditors.

CHAPTER VI.

DR. SACHEVERELL, AND THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT.

SOME of Defoe's biographers have claimed for him that he anticipated the doctrines of Free Trade. This is an error. It is true that Defoe was never tired of insisting, in pamphlets, books, and number after number of the *Review*, on the all-importance of trade to the nation. Trade was the foundation of England's greatness; success in trade was the most honourable patent of nobility; next to the maintenance of the Protestant religion, the encouragement of trade should be the chief care of English statesmen. On these heads Defoe's enthusiasm was boundless, and his eloquence inexhaustible. It is true also that he supported with all his might the commercial clauses of the Treaty of Utrecht, which sought to abolish the prohibitory duties on our trade with France. It is this last circumstance which has earned for him the repute of being a pioneer of Free Trade. But his title to that repute does not bear examination. He was not so far in advance of his age as to detect the fallacy of the mercantile system. On the contrary, he avowed his adherence to it against those of his contemporaries who were inclined to call it in question. How Defoe came to support the new commercial treaty with France, and the grounds on which he supported it, can only be understood by looking at his relations with the Government.

While Defoe was living in Scotland in 1707, and filling the *Review* so exclusively with Scotch affairs that his readers, according to his own account, began to say that the fellow could talk of nothing but the Union, and had grown mighty dull of late, Harley's position in the Ministry was gradually becoming very insecure. He was suspected of cooling in his zeal for the war, and of keeping up clandestine relations with the Tories; and when Marlborough returned from his campaign at the close of the year he insisted upon the Secretary's dismissal. The Queen, who secretly resented the Marlborough yoke, at first refused her consent. Presently an incident occurred which gave them an excuse for more urgent pressure. One Gregg, a clerk in Harley's office, was discovered to be in secret correspondence with the French Court, furnishing Louis with the contents of important State papers. Harley was charged with complicity. This charge was groundless,

but he could not acquit himself of gross negligence in the custody of his papers. Godolphin and Marlborough threatened to resign unless he was dismissed. Then the Queen yielded.

When Harley fell, Defoe, according to his own account in the *Appeal to Honour and Justice*, looked upon himself as lost, taking it for granted that "when a great officer fell, all who came in by his interest fall with him." But when his benefactor heard of this, and of Defoe's "resolution never to abandon the fortunes of the man to whom he owed so much," he kindly urged the devoted follower to think rather of his own interest than of any romantic obligation. "My lord Treasurer," he said, "will employ you in nothing but what is for the public service, and agreeably to your own sentiments of things; and besides, it is the Queen you are serving, who has been very good to you. Pray apply yourself as you used to do; I shall not take it ill from you in the least." To Godolphin accordingly Defoe applied himself, and was by him introduced a second time to Her Majesty and to the honour of kissing her hand, and obtained "the continuance of an apointment which Her Majesty had been pleased to make in consideration of a former special service he had done." This was the appointment which he held while he was challenging his enemies to say whether his outward circumstances looked like the figure the agents of Courts and Princes make.

The services on which Defoe was employed were, as before, of two kinds, active and literary. Shortly after the change in the Ministry early in 1708, news came of the gathering of the French expedition at Dunkirk, with a view, it was suspected, of trying to effect a landing in Scotland. Defoe was at once despatched to Edinburgh on an errand which, he says, was "far from being unfit for a sovereign to direct or an honest man to perform." If his duties were to mix with the people and ascertain the state of public feeling, and more specifically to sound suspected characters, to act, in short, as a political detective or spy, the service was one which it was essential that the Government should get some trustworthy person to undertake, and which any man at such a crisis might perform if he could, without any discredit to his honesty or his patriotism. The independence of the sea-girt realm was never in greater peril. The French expedition was a well-conceived diversion, and it was imperative that the Government should know on what amount of support the invaders might rely in the bitterness prevailing in Scotland after the Union. Fortunately the loyalty of the Scotch Jacobites was not put to the test. As in the case of the Spanish Armada, accident fought on our side. The French fleet succeeded in reaching the coast of Scotland before the ships of the defenders; but it overshot its arranged landing-point, and had no hope but to sail back ingloriously to Dunkirk. Meanwhile, Defoe had satisfactorily discharged himself of his mission. Godolphin showed his appreciation of his services by recalling him as soon as Parliament was dissolved, to travel through the counties and serve the cause of the Government in the general

elections. He was frequently sent to Scotland again on similarly secret errands, and seems to have established a printing business there, made arrangements for the simultaneous issue of the *Review* in Edinburgh and London, besides organizing Edinburgh newspapers, executing commissions for English merchants, and setting on foot a linen manufactory.

But we are more concerned with the literary labours of this versatile and indefatigable genius. These, in the midst of his multifarious commercial and diplomatic concerns, he never intermitted. All the time the *Review* continued to give a brilliant support to the Ministry. The French expedition had lent a new interest to the affairs of Scotland, and Defoe advertised, that though he never intended to make the *Review* a newspaper, circumstances enabled him to furnish exceptionally correct intelligence from Scotland as well as sound impartial opinions. The intelligence which he communicated was all with a purpose—the promotion of a better understanding between the united nations. He never had a better opportunity for preaching from his favourite text of Peace and Union, and he used it characteristically, championing the cause of the Scotch Presbyterians, asserting the firmness of their loyalty, smoothing over trading grievances by showing elaborately how both sides benefited from the arrangements of the Union, launching shafts in every direction at his favourite butts, and never missing a chance of exulting in his own superior wisdom. In what a posture would England have been now, he cried, if those wiseacres had been listened to, who were for trusting the defence of England solely to the militia and the fleet! Would our fleet have kept the French from landing if Providence had not interposed; and if they landed, would a militia, undermined by disaffection, have been able to beat them back? The French king deserved a vote of thanks for opening the eyes of the nation against foolish advisers, and for helping it to heal internal divisions. Louis, poor gentleman, was much to be pitied, for his informers had evidently served him badly, and had led him to expect a greater amount of support from disloyal factions than they had the will or the courage to give him.

During the electoral canvass, Defoe surpassed himself in the lively vigour of his advocacy of the Whig cause. "And now, gentlemen of England," he began in the *Review*—as it went on he became more and more direct and familiar in his manner of addressing his readers—"now we are a-going to choose Parliament men, I will tell you a story." And he proceeded to tell how in a certain borough a great patron procured the election of a "shock dog" as its parliamentary representative. Money and ale, Defoe says, could do anything. "God knows I speak it with regret for you all and for your posterity, it is not an impossible thing to debauch this nation into a choice of thieves, knaves, devils, shock dogs, or anything comparatively speaking, by the power of various intoxications." He spent several numbers of the *Review* in an ironical advice to the electors to choose Tories, showing with all his skill

"the mighty and prevailing reason why we should have a Tory Parliament." "O gentlemen," he cried, "if we have any mind to buy some more experience, be sure and choose Tories." "We want a little instruction, we want to go to school to knaves and fools." Afterwards, dropping this thin mask, he declared that among the electors only "the drunken, the debauched, the swearing, the persecuting" would vote for the High-fliers. "The grave, the sober, the thinking, the prudent," would vote for the Whigs. "A House of Tories is a House of Devils." "If ever we have a Tory Parliament, the nation is undone." In his *Appeal to Honour and Justice* Defoe explained, that while he was serving Godolphin, "being resolved to remove all possible ground of suspicion that he kept any secret correspondence, he never visited, or wrote to, or any way corresponded with his principal benefactor for above three years." Seeing that Harley was at that time the leader of the party which Defoe was denouncing with such spirit, it would have been strange indeed if there had been much intercourse between them.

Though regarded after his fall from office as the natural leader of the Tory party, Harley was a very reserved politician, who kept his own counsel, used instruments of many shapes and sizes, steered clear of entangling engagements, and left himself free to take advantage of various opportunities, To wage war against the Ministry was the work of more ardent partisans. He stood by and waited while Bolingbroke and Rochester and their allies in the press cried out that the Government was now in the hands of the enemies of the Church, accused the Whigs of protracting the war to fill their own pockets with the plunder of the Supplies, and called upon the nation to put an end to their jobbery and mismanagement. The victory of Oudenarde in the summer of 1708 gave them a new handle. "What is the good," they cried, "of these glorious victories, if they do not bring peace? What do we gain by beating the French in campaign after campaign, if we never bring them nearer to submission? It is incredible that the French King is not willing to make peace, if the Whigs did not profit too much by the war to give peace any encouragement." To these arguments for peace, Defoe opposed himself steadily in the *Review*. "Well, gentlemen," he began, when the news came of the battle of Oudenarde, "have the French noosed themselves again? Let us pray the Duke of Marlborough that a speedy peace may not follow, for what would become of us?" He was as willing for a peace on honourable terms as any man, but a peace till the Protestant Succession was secured and the balance of power firmly settled, "would be fatal to peace at home." "If that fatal thing called Peace abroad should happen, we shall certainly be undone." Presently, however, the French King began to make promising overtures for peace; the Ministry, in hopes of satisfactory terms, encouraged them; the talk through the nation was all of peace, and the Whigs contented themselves with passing an address to the Crown through Parliament urging the queen to make no peace till the Pretender

should be disowned by the French Court, and the Succession guaranteed by a compact with the Allies. Throughout the winter the *Review* expounded with brilliant clearness the only conditions on which an honourable peace could be founded, and prepared the nation to doubt the sincerity with which Louis had entered into negotiations. Much dissatisfaction was felt, and that dissatisfaction was eagerly fanned by the Tories when the negotiations fell through, in consequence of the distrust with which the allies regarded Louis, and their imposing upon him too hard a test of his honesty. Defoe fought vigorously against the popular discontent. The charges against Marlborough were idle rhodomontade. We had no reason to be discouraged with the progress of the war unless we had formed extravagant expectations. Though the French King's resources had been enfeebled, and he might reasonably have been expected to desire peace, he did not care for the welfare of France so much as for his own glory; he would fight to gain his purpose while there was a pistole in his treasury, and we must not expect Paris to be taken in a week. Nothing could be more admirable than Godolphin's management of our own Treasury; he deserved almost more credit than the Duke himself. "Your Treasurer has been your general of generals; without his exquisite management of the cash the Duke of Marlborough must have been beaten."

The Sacheverell incident, which ultimately led to the overthrow of the Ministry, gave Defoe a delightful opening for writing in their defence. A collection of his articles on this subject would show his controversial style at its best and brightest. Sacheverell and he were old antagonists. Sacheverell's "bloody flag and banner of defiance," and other High-flying truculencies, had furnished him with the main basis of his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. The laugh of the populace was then on Defoe's side, partly, perhaps, because the Government had prosecuted him. But in the changes of the troubled times, the Oxford Doctor, nurtured in "the scolding of the ancients," had found a more favourable opportunity. His literary skill was of the most mechanical kind; but at the close of 1709, when hopes of peace had been raised only to be disappointed, and the country was suffering from the distress of a prolonged war, people were more in a mood to listen to a preacher who disdained to check the sweep of his rhetoric by qualifications or abatements, and luxuriated in denouncing the Queen's Ministers from the pulpit under scriptural allegories. He delivered a tremendous philippic about the Perils of False Brethren, as a sermon before the Lord Mayor in November. It would have been a wise thing for the Ministry to have left Sacheverell to be dealt with by their supporters in the press and in the pulpit. But in an avil hour Godolphin, stung by a nickname thrown at him by the rhetorical priest—a singularly comfortable-looking man to have so virulent a tongue, one of those orators who thrive on ill-conditioned language—resolved, contrary to the advice of more judicious colleagues, to have him impeached by the House of Commons. The Commons

readily voted the sermon seditious, scandalous, and malicious, and agreed to a resolution for his impeachment; the Lords ordered that the case should be heard at their bar; and Westminster Hall was prepared to be the scene of a great public trial. At first Defoe, in heaping contemptuous ridicule upon the High-flying Doctor, had spoken as if he would consider prosecution a blunder. The man ought rather to be encouraged to go on exposing himself and his party. "Let him go on," he said, "to bully Moderation, explode Toleration, and damn the Union; the gain will be ours."

"You should use him as we do a hot horse. When he first frets and pulls, keep a stiff rein and hold him in if you can; but if he grows mad and furious, slack your hand, clap your heels to him, and let him go. Give him his belly full of it. Away goes the beast like a fury over hedge and ditch, till he runs himself off his mettle; perhaps bogs himself, and then he grows quiet of course. . . . Besides, good people, do you not know the nature of the barking creatures? If you pass but by, and take no notice, they will yelp and make a noise, and perhaps run a little after you; but turn back, offer to strike them or throw stones at them, and you'll never have done—nay, you'll raise all the dogs of the parish upon you."

This last was precisely what the Government did, and they found reason to regret that they did not take Defoe's advice and let Sacheverell alone. When, however, they did resolve to prosecute him, Defoe immediately turned round, and exulted in the prosecution, as the very thing which he had foreseen. "Was not the *Review* right when he said you ought to let such people run on till they were out of breath? Did I not note to you that precipitations have always ruined them and served us? . . . Not a hound in the pack opened like him. He has done the work effectually. . . . He has raised the house and waked the landlady. . . . Thank him, good people, thank him and clap him on the back; let all his party do but this, and the day is our own." Nor did Defoe omit to remind the good people that he had been put in the pillory for satirically hinting that the High-Church favoured such doctrines as Sacheverell was now prosecuted for. In his *Hymn to the Pillory* he had declared that Sacheverell ought to stand there in his place. His wish was now gratified; "the bar of the House of Commons is the worst pillory in the nation." In the two months which elapsed before the trial, during which the excitement was steadily growing, Sacheverell and his doctrines were the main topic of the *Review*. If a popular tempest could have been allayed by brilliant argument, Defoe's papers ought to have done it. He was a manly antagonist, and did not imitate coarser pamphleteers in raking up scandals about the Doctor's private life—at least not under his own name. There was, indeed, a pamphlet issued by "a Gentleman of Oxford," which bears many marks of Defoe's authorship, and contains an account of some passages in Sacheverell's life not at all to the clergyman's credit. But the only pamphlet outside the *Review* which the biographers have ascribed to

Defoe s activity, is a humorous Letter from the Pope to Don Sacheverellio, giving him instructions how to advance the interest of the Pretender. In the *Review* Defoe, treating Sacheverell with riotously mirthful contempt, calls for the punishment of the doctrines rather than the man. During the trial, which lasted more than a fortnight, a mob attended the Doctor's carriage every day from his lodgings in the Temple to Westminster Hall, huzzaing, and pressing to kiss his hand, and spent the evenings in rabbling the Dissenters' meeting-houses, and hooting before the residences of prominent Whigs. Defoe had always said that the High-fliers would use violence to their opponents if they had the power, and here was a confirmation of his opinion on which he did not fail to insist. The sentence on Sacheverell, that his sermon and vindication should be burnt by the common hangman and himself suspended from preaching for three years, was hailed by the mob as an acquittal, and celebrated by tumultuous gatherings and bonfires. Defoe reasoned hard and joyfully to prove that the penalty was everything that could be wished, and exactly what he had all along advised and contemplated, but he did not succeed in persuading the masses that the Government had not suffered a defeat.

The impeachment of Sacheverell turned popular feeling violently against the Whigs. The break up of the Gertruydenberg Conference without peace gave a strong push in the same direction. It was all due, the Tories shouted, and the people were now willing to believe, to the folly of our Government in insisting upon impossible conditions from the French King, and their shameless want of patriotism in consulting the interests of the Allies rather than of England. The Queen, who for some time had been longing to get rid of her Whig Ministers, did not at once set sail with this breeze. She dismissed the Earl of Sunderland in June, and sent word to her allies that she meant to make no further changes. Their ambassadors, with what was even then resented as an impertinence, congratulated her on this resolution, and then in August she took the momentous step of dismissing Godolphin, and putting the Treasury nominally in commission, but really under the management of Harley. For a few weeks it seems to have been Harley's wish to conduct the administration in concert with the remaining Whig members, but the extreme Tories, with whom he had been acting, overbore his moderate intentions. They threatened to desert him unless he broke clearly and definitely with the Whigs. In October accordingly the Whigs were all turned out of the Administration, Tories put in their places, Parliament dissolved, and writs issued for new elections. "So sudden and entire a change of the Ministry," Bishop Burnet remarks, "is scarce to be found in our history, especially where men of great abilities had served both with zeal and success." That the Queen should dismiss one or all of her Ministers in the face of a Parliamentary majority excited no surprise; but that the whole Administration should be changed at a stroke from one party to the other was a new and strange thing. The old Earl of Sunderland's

suggestion to William III. had not taken root in constitutional practice; this was the fulfilment of it under the gradual pressure of circumstances.

Defoe's conduct while the political balance was rocking, and after the Whig side had decisively kicked the beam, is a curious study. One hardly knows which to admire most, the loyalty with which he stuck to the falling house till the moment of its collapse, or the adroitness with which he escaped from the ruins. Censure of his shiftiness is partly disarmed by the fact that there were so many in that troubled and uncertain time who would have acted like him if they had had the skill. Besides, he acted so steadily and with such sleepless vigilance and energy on the principle that the appearance of honesty is the best policy, that at this distance of time it is not easy to catch him tripping, and if we refuse to be guided by the opinion of his contemporaries, we almost inevitably fall victims to his incomparable plausibility. Deviations in his political writings from the course of the honest patriot are almost as difficult to detect as flaws in the verisimilitude of *Robinson Crusoe* or the *Journal of the Plague.*

During the two months' interval between the substitution of Dartmouth for Sunderland and the fall of Godolphin, Defoe used all his powers of eloquence and argument to avert the threatened changes in the Ministry, and keep the Tories out. He had a personal motive for this, he confessed. "My own share in the ravages they shall make upon our liberties is like to be as severe as any man's, from the rage and fury of a party who are in themselves implacable, and whom God has not been pleased to bless me with a talent to flatter and submit to." Of the dismissed minister Sunderland, with whom Defoe had been in personal relations during the negotiations for the Union, he spoke in terms of the warmest praise, always with a formal profession of challenging the Queen's judgment in discharging her servant. "My Lord Sunderland," he said, "leaves the Ministry with the most unblemished character that ever I read of any statesman in the world." "I am making no court to my Lord Sunderland. The unpolished author of this paper never had the talent of making his court to the great men of the age." But where is the objection against his conduct? Not a dog of the party can bark against him. "They cannot show me a man of their party that ever did act like him, or of whom they can say we should believe he would if he had the opportunity." The Tories were clamouring for the dismissal of all the other Whigs. High-Church addresses to the Queen were pouring in, claiming to represent the sense of the nation, and hinting an absolute want of confidence in the Administration. Defoe examined the conduct of the ministers severally and collectively, and demanded where was the charge against them, where the complaint, where the treasure misapplied?

As for the sense of the nation, there was one sure way of testing this better than any got-up addresses, namely, the rise and fall of the public credit. The public stocks fell immediately on the

news of Sunderland's dismissal, and were only partially revived upon Her Majesty's assurance to the Directors of the Bank that she meant to keep the Ministry otherwise unchanged. A rumour that Parliament was to be dissolved had sent them down again. If the public credit is thus affected by the mere apprehension of a turn of affairs in England, Defoe said, the thing itself will be a fatal blow to it. The coy Lady Credit had been wavering in her attachment to England; any sudden change would fright her away altogether. As for the pooh-pooh cry of the Tories that the national credit was of no consequence, that a nation could not be in debt to itself, and that their moneyed men would come forward with nineteen shillings in the pound for the support of the war, Defoe treated this clap-trap with proper ridicule.

But in spite of all Defoe's efforts, the crash came. On the 10th of August the Queen sent to Godolphin for the Treasurer's staff, and Harley became her Prime Minister. How did Defoe behave then? The first two numbers of the *Review* after the Lord Treasurer's fall are among the most masterly of his writings. He was not a small, mean, timid time-server and turn-coat. He faced about with bold and steady caution, on the alert to give the lie to anybody who dared to accuse him of facing about at all. He frankly admitted that he was in a quandary what to say about the change that had taken place. "If a man could be found that could sail north and south, that could speak truth and falsehood, that could turn to the right hand and the left, all at the same time, he would be the man, he would be the only proper person that should now speak." Of one thing only he was certain. "We are sure honest men go out." As for their successors, "it is our business to hope, and time must answer for those that come in. If Tories, if Jacobites, if High-fliers, if madmen of any kind are to come in, I am against them; I ask them no favour, I make no court to them, nor am I going about to please them." But the question was, what was to be done in the circumstances? Defoe stated plainly two courses, with their respective dangers. To cry out about the new Ministry was to ruin public credit. To profess cheerfulness was to encourage the change and strengthen the hands of those that desired to push it farther. On the whole, for himself he considered the first danger the most to be dreaded of the two. Therefore he announced his intention of devoting his whole energy to maintaining the public credit, and advised all true Whigs to do likewise. "Though I don't like the crew, I won't sink the ship. I'll do my best to save the ship. I'll pump and heave and haul, and do anything I can, though he that pulls with me were my enemy. The reason is plain. We are all in the ship, and must sink or swim together."

What could be more plausible? What conduct more truly patriotic? Indeed, it would be difficult to find fault with Defoe's behaviour, were it not for the rogue's protestations of inability to court the favour of great men, and his own subsequent confessions in his *Appeal to Honour and Justice*, as to what took place be-

hind the scenes. Immediately on the turn of affairs he took steps to secure that connexion with the Government, the existence of which he was always denying. The day after Godolphin's displacement, he tells us, he waited on him, and "humbly asked his lordship's direction what course he should take." Godolphin at once assured him, in very much the same words that Harley had used before, that the change need make no difference to him; he was the Queen's servant, and all that had been done for him was by Her Majesty's special and particular direction; his business was to wait till he saw things settled, and then apply himself to the Ministers of State to receive Her Majesty's commands from them. Thereupon Defoe resolved to guide himself by the following principle:—

"It occurred to me immediately, as a principle for my conduct, that it was not material to me what ministers Her Majesty was pleased to employ; my duty was to go along with every Ministry, so far as they did not break in upon the Constitution, and the laws and liberties of my country; my part being only the duty of a subject, viz., to submit to all lawful commands, and to enter into no service which was not justifiable by the laws; to all which I have exactly obliged myself."

Defoe was thus, as he says, providentially cast back upon his original benefactor. That he received any consideration, pension, gratification, or reward for his services to Harley, "except that old appointment which Her Majesty was pleased to make him," he strenuously denied. The denial is possibly true, and it is extremely probable that he was within the truth when he protested in the most solemn manner that he had never "received any instructions, directions, orders, or let them call it what they will, of that kind, for the writing of any part of what he had written, or any materials for the putting together, for the forming any book or pamphlet whatsoever, from the said Earl of Oxford, late Lord Treasurer," or from any person by his order or direction, since the time that the late Earl of Godolphin was Lord Treasurer." Defoe declared that "in all his writing, he ever capitulated for his liberty to speak according to his own judgment of things," and we may easily believe him. He was much too clever a servant to need instructions.

His secret services to Harley in the new elections are probably buried in oblivion. In the *Review* he pursued a strain which to the reader who does not take his articles in connection with the politics of the time, might appear to be thoroughly consistent with his advice to the electors on previous occasions. He meant to confine himself, he said at starting, rather to the manner of choosing than to the persons to be chosen, and he never denounced bribery, intimidation, rioting, rabbling, and every form of interference with the electors' freedom of choice, in more energetic language. As regarded the persons to be chosen, his advice was as before, to choose moderate men—men of sense and temper, not

men of fire and fury. But he no longer asserted, as he had done before, the exclusive possession of good qualities by the Whigs. He now recognised that there were hot Whigs as well as moderate Whigs, moderate Tories as well as hot Tories. It was for the nation to avoid both extremes and rally round the men of moderation, whether Whig or Tory. "If we have a Tory High-flying Parliament, we Tories are undone. If we have a hot Whig Parliament, we Whigs are undone."

The terms of Defoe's advice were unexceptionable, but the Whigs perceived a change from the time when he declared that if ever we have a Tory Parliament the nation is undone. It was as if a Republican writer, after the *coup d'état* of the 16th May, 1877, had warned the French against electing extreme Republicans, and had echoed the Marshal-President's advice to give their votes to moderate men of all parties. Defoe did not increase the conviction of his party loyalty when a Tory Parliament was returned, by trying to prove that whatever the new members might call themselves, they must inevitably be Whigs. He admitted in the most unqualified way that the elections had been disgracefully riotous and disorderly, and lectured the constituencies freely on their conduct. "It is not," he said, "a Free Parliament that you have chosen. You have met, mobbed, rabbled, and thrown dirt at one another, but election by mob is no more free election than Oliver's election by a standing army. Parliaments and rabbles are contrary things." Yet he had hopes of the gentlemen who had been thus chosen.

> "I have it upon many good grounds, as I think I told you, that there are some people who are shortly to come together, of whose character, let the people that send them up think what they will, when they come thither they will not run the mad length that is expected of them; they will act upon the Revolution principle, keep within the circle of the law, proceed with temper, moderation, and justice, to support the same interest we have all carried on—and this I call being Whiggish, or acting as Whigs.
>
> "I shall not trouble you with further examining why they will be so, or why they will act thus; I think it is so plain from the necessity of the Constitution and the circumstances of things before them, that it needs no further demonstration—they will be Whigs, they must be Whigs; there is no remedy, for the Constitution is a Whig."

The new members of Parliament must either be Whigs or traitors, for everybody who favours the Protestant succession is a Whig, and everybody who does not is a traitor. Defoe used the same ingenuity in playing upon words in his arguments in support of the public credit. Every true Whig, he argued, in the *Review* and in separate essays, was bound to uphold the public credit, for to permit it to be impaired was the surest way to let in the Pretender. The Whigs were accused of withdrawing their money from the public stocks, to mark their distrust of the Government. "Nonsense!" Defoe said, "in that case they would not be Whigs." Naturally enough, as the *Review* now practically supported a Min-

istry in which extreme Tories had the predominance, he was upbraided for having gone over to that party. "Why, gentlemen," he retorted, "it would be more natural for you to think I am turned Turk than High flier; and to make me a Mahometan would not be half so ridiculous as to make me say the Whigs are running down credit, when, on the contrary, I am still satisfied if there were no Whigs at this time, there would hardly be any such thing as credit left among us." "If the credit of the nation is to be maintained, we must all act as Whigs, because credit can be maintained upon no other foot. Had the doctrine of non-resistance of tyranny been voted, had the Prerogative been exalted above the Law, and property subjected to absolute will, would Parliament have voted the funds? Credit supposes Whigs lending and a Whig Government borrowing. It is nonsense to talk of credit and passive submission."

Had Defoe confined himself to lecturing those hot Whigs who were so afraid of the secret Jacobitism of Harley's colleagues that they were tempted to withdraw their money from the public stocks, posterity, unable to judge how far these fears were justified, and how far it was due to a happy accident that they were not realised, might have given him credit for sacrificing partisanship to patriotism. This plea could hardly be used for another matter in which, with every show of reasonable fairness, he gave a virtual support to the Ministry. We have seen how he spoke of Marlborough, and Godolphin's management of the army and the finances when the Whigs were in office. When the Tories came in, they at once set about redeeming their pledges to inquire into the malversation of their predecessors. Concerning this proceeding, Defoe spoke with an approval which, though necessarily guarded in view of his former professions of extreme satisfaction, was none the less calculated to recommend.

"Inquiry into miscarriages in things so famous and so fatal as war and battle is a thing so popular that no man can argue against it; and had we paid well, and hanged well, much sooner, as some men had not been less in a condition to mistake, so some others might not have been here to find fault. But it is better late than never; when the inquiry is set about heartily, it may be useful on several accounts, both to unravel past errors and to prevent new. For my part, as we have for many years past groaned for want of justice upon wilful mistakes, yet, in hopes some of the careful and mischievous designing gentlemen may come in for a share, I am glad the work is begun."

With equal good humour and skill in leaving open a double interpretation, he commented on the fact that the new Parliament did not, as had been customary, give a formal vote of thanks to Marlborough for his conduct of his last campaign.

"We have had a mighty pother here in print about rewarding of generals. Some think great men too much rewarded, and some think them too little rewarded. The case is so nice, neither side will bear me to

speak my mind; but I am persuaded of this, that there is no general has or ever will merit great things of us, but he has received and will receive all the grateful acknowledgments he OUGHT to expect."

But his readers would complain that he had not defined the word "ought." That, he said, with audacious pleasantry, he left to them. And while they were on the subject of mismanagement, he would give them a word of advice which he had often given them before. "While you bite and devour one another, you are all mismanagers. Put an end to your factions, your tumults, your rabbles, or you will not be able to make war upon anybody." Previously, however, his way of making peace at home was to denounce the High-fliers. He was still pursuing the same object, though by a different course, now that the leaders of the High-fliers were in office, when he declared that "those Whigs who say that the new Ministry is entirely composed of Tories and High-fliers are fool-Whigs." The remark was no doubt perfectly true, but yet if Defoe had been thoroughly consistent he ought at least, instead of supporting the Ministry on account of the small moderate element it contained, to have urged its purification from dangerous ingredients.

This, however, it must be admitted, he also did, though indirectly and at a somewhat later stage, when Harley's tenure of the Premiership was menaced by High-fliers who thought him much too lukewarm a leader. A "cave," the famous October Club, was formed in the autumn of 1711, to urge more extreme measures upon the ministry against Whig officials, and to organise a High-Church agitation throughout the country. It consisted chiefly of country squires, who wished to see members of the late Ministry impeached, and the Duke of Marlborough dismissed from the command of the army. At Harley's instigation Swift wrote an "advice" to these hot partisans, beseeching them to have patience and trust the Ministry, and everything that they wished would happen in due time. Defoe sought to break their ranks by a direct onslaught in his most vigorous style, denouncing them in the *Review* as Jacobites in disguise and an illicit importation from France, and writing their "secret history," "with some friendly characters of the illustrious members of that honourable society" in two separate tracts. This skirmish served the double purpose of strengthening Harley against the reckless zealots of his party, and keeping up Defoe's appearance of impartiality. Throughout the fierce struggle of parties, never so intense in any period of our history as during those years when the Constitution itself hung in the balance, it was as a True-born Englishman first and a Whig and Dissenter afterwards, that Defoe gave his support to the Tory Ministry. It may not have been his fault; he may have been most unjustly suspected; but nobody at the time would believe his protestations of independence. When his former High-flying persecutor, the Earl of Nottingham, went over to the Whigs, and with their acquiescence, or at least without their active opposition, introduced another Bill to put down Occasional Conformity, Defoe wrote trenchantly against it. But even then the Dissenters, as he loudly

lamented, repudiated his alliance. The Whigs were not so much pleased on this occasion with his denunciations of the persecuting spirit of the High-Churchmen, as they were enraged by his stinging taunts levelled at themselves for abandoning the Dissenters to their persecutors. The Dissenters must now see, Defoe said, that they would not be any better off under a Low-Church ministry than under a High-Church ministry. But the Dissenters, considering that the Whigs were too much in a minority to prevent the passing of the Bill, however willing to do so, would only see in their professed champion an artful supporter of the men in power.

A curious instance has been preserved of the estimate of Defoe's character at this time.* M. Mesnager, an agent sent by the French King to sound the Ministry and the country as to terms of peace, wanted an able pamphleteer to promote the French interest. The Swedish Resident recommended Defoe, who had just issued a tract, entitled *Reasons why this Nation ought to put an end to this expensive War.* Mesnager was delighted with the tract, at once had it translated into French and circulated through the Netherlands, employed the Swede to treat with Defoe, and sent him a hundred pistoles, by way of earnest. Defoe kept the pistoles, but told the Queen, M. Mesnager recording that though "he missed his aim in this person, the money perhaps was not wholly lost; for I afterwards understood that the man was in the service of the state, and that he had let the Queen know of the hundred pistoles he had received; so I was obliged to sit still, and be very well satisfied that I had not discovered myself to him, for it was not our season yet." The anecdote at once shows the general opinion entertained of Defoe, and the fact that he was less corruptible than was supposed. There can be little doubt that our astute intriguer would have outwitted the French emissary if he had not been warned in time, pocketed his bribes. and wormed his secrets out of him for the information of the Government.

During Godolphin's Ministry, Defoe's cue had been to reason with the nation against too impatient a longing for peace. Let us have peace by all means, had been his text, but not till honourable terms have been secured, and meantime the war is going on as prosperously as any but madmen can desire. He repeatedly challenged adversaries who compared what he wrote then with what he wrote under the new Ministry, to prove him guilty of inconsistency. He stood on safe ground when he made this challenge, for circumstances had changed sufficiently to justify any change of opinion. The plans of the confederates were disarranged by the death of the Emperor, and the accession of his brother, the Archduke Charles, to the vacant crown. To give the crown of Spain in these new circumstances to the Archduke, as had been the object of the Allies when they began the war, would have been as dangerous to the balance of power as to let Spain pass to Louis's grandson, Philip

* I doubt whether it adds to the credibility of the story in all points that the minutes of M. Mesnager's Negotiations were "translated," and probably composed by Defoe himself. See. p. 87.

of Anjou. It would be more dangerous, Defoe argued; and by far the safest course would be to give Spain to Philip and his posterity, who "would be as much Spaniards in a very short time, as ever Philip II. was or any of his other predecessors." This was the main argument which had been used in the latter days of King William against going to war at all, and Defoe had then refuted it scornfully; but circumstances had changed, and he not only adopted it, but also issued an essay "proving that it was always the sense both of King William and of all the Confederates, and even of the Grand Alliance itself, that the Spanish monarchy should never be united in the person of the Emperor." Partition the Spanish dominions in Europe between France and Germany, and the West Indies between England and Holland—such was Defoe's idea of a proper basis of peace.

But while Defoe expounded in various forms the conditions of a good peace, he devoted his main energy to proving that peace under some conditions was a necessity. He dilated on the enormous expense of the war, and showed by convincing examples that it was ruining the trade of the country. Much that he said was perfectly true, but if he had taken M. Mesnager's bribes and loyally carried out his instructions, he could not more effectually have served the French King's interests than by writing as he did at that juncture. The proclaimed necessity under which England lay to make peace, offered Louis an advantage which he was not slow to take. The proposals which he made at the Congress of Utrecht, and which he had ascertained would be accepted by the English Ministry and the Queen, were not unjustly characterised by the indignant Whigs as being such as he might have made at the close of a successful war. The territorial concessions to England and Holland were insignificant; the States were to have the right of garrisoning certain barrier towns in Flanders, and England was to have some portions of Canada. But there was no mention of dividing the West Indies between them—the West Indies were to remain attached to Spain. It was the restoration of their trade that was their main desire in these great commercial countries, and even that object Louis agreed to promote in a manner that seemed, according to the ideas of the time, to be more to his own advantage than to theirs. In the case of England, he was to remove prohibitions against our imports, and in return we engaged to give the French imports the privileges of the most favoured nations. In short, we were to have free trade with France, which the commercial classes of the time looked upon as a very doubtful blessing.

It is because Defoe wrote in favour of this free trade that he is supposed to have been superior to the commercial fallacies of the time. But a glance at his arguments shows that this is a very hasty inference. It was no part of Defoe's art as a controversialist to seek to correct popular prejudices; on the contrary, it was his habit to take them for granted as the bases of his arguments, to work from them as premisses towards his conclusion. He expressly avowed himself a prohibitionist in principle :—

"I am far from being of their mind who say that all prohibitions are destructive to trade, and that wise nations, the Dutch, make no prohibitions at all.

"Where any nation has, by the singular blessing of God, a produce given to their country from which such a manufacture can be made as other nations cannot be without, and none can make that produce but themselves, it would be distraction in that nation not to prohibit the exportation of that original produce till it is manufactured."

He had been taunted with flying in the face of what he had himself said in King William's time in favor of prohibition. But he boldly undertakes to prove that prohibition was absolutely necessary in King William's time, and not only so, but that "the advantages we may make of taking off a prohibition now are all founded upon the advantages we did make of laying on a prohibition then: that the same reason which made a prohibition then the best thing, makes it now the maddest thing a nation could do or ever did in the matter of trade." In King William's time, the balance of trade was against us to the extent of 850,000*l.*, in consequence of the French King's laying extravagant duties upon the import of all our woollen manufactures.

"Whoever thinks that by opening the French trade I should mean . . . that we should come to trade with them 850,000*l. per annum* to our loss, must think me as mad as I think him for suggesting it; but if, on the contrary, I prove that as we traded then 850,000*l.* a year to our loss, we can trade now with them 600,000*l.* to our gain, then I will venture to draw this consequence, that we are distracted, speaking of our trading wits, if we do not trade with them."

In a preface to the Eighth Volume of the *Review* (July 29, 1712), Defoe announced his intention of discontinuing the publication, in consequence of the tax then imposed on newspapers. We can hardly suppose that this was his real motive, and as a matter of fact the *Review*, whose death had been announced, reappeared in due course in the form of a single leaf, and was published in that form till the 11th of June, 1713. By that time a new project was on foot which Defoe had frequently declared his intention of starting, a paper devoted exclusively to the discussion of the affairs of trade. The *Review* at one time had declared its main subject to be trade, but had claimed a liberty of digression under which the main subject had all but disappeared. At last, however, in May, 1713, when popular excitement and hot Parliamentary debates were expected on the Commercial Treaty with France, an exclusively trading paper was established, entitled *Mercator*. Defoe denied being the author—that is conductor or editor of this paper—and said that he had not power to put what he would into it; which may have been literally true. Every number, however, bears traces of his hand or guidance; *Mercator* is identical in opinions, style, and spirit with the *Review*, differing only in the greater openness of its attacks upon the opposition of

the Whigs to the Treaty of Commerce. Party spirit was so violent that summer, after the publication of the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht, that Defoe was probably glad to shelter himself under the responsibility of another name; he had flaunted the cloak of impartial advice till it had become a thing of shreds and patches.

To prove that the balance of trade, in spite of a prevailing impression to the contrary, not only might be, but had been, on the side of England, was the chief purpose of *Mercator*. The Whig *Flying Post* chaffed *Mercator* for trying to reconcile impossibilities, but *Mercator* held stoutly on with an elaborate apparatus of comparative tables of exports and imports, and ingenious schemes for the development of various branches of the trade with France. Defoe was too fond of carrying the war into the enemy's country, to attack prohibitions or the received doctrine as to the balance of trade in principle; he fought the enemy spiritedly on their own ground. "Take a medium of three years for above forty years past, and calculate the exports and imports to and from France, and it shall appear the balance of trade was always on the English side, to the loss and disadvantage of the French." It followed, upon the received commercial doctrines, that the French King was making a great concession in consenting to take off high duties upon English goods. This was precisely what Defoe was labouring to prove. "The French King in taking off the said high duties ruins all his own manufactures." The common belief was that the terms of peace would ruin English manufacturing industry; full in the teeth of this, Defoe, as was his daring custom, flung the paradox of the extreme opposite. On this occasion he acted purely as a party writer. That he was never a free-trader, at least in principle, will appear from the following extract from his *Plan of the English Commerce*, published in 1728:—

"Seeing trade then is the fund of wealth and power, we cannot wonder that we see the wisest Princes and States anxious and concerned for the increase of the commerce and trade of their subjects, and of the growth of the country; anxious to propagate the sale of such goods as are the manufacture of their own subjects, and that employs their own people; especially of such as keep the money of their dominions at home; and on the contrary, for prohibiting the importation from abroad of such things as are the product of other countries, and of the labour of other people, or which carry money back in return, and not merchandise in exchange.

"Nor can we wonder that we see such Princes and States endeavouring to set up such manufactures in their own countries, which they see successfully and profitably carried on by their neighbours, and to endeavour to procure the materials proper for setting up those manufactures by all just and possible methods from other countries.

"Hence we cannot blame the French or Germans for endeavouring to get over the British wool into their hands, by the help of which they may bring their people to imitate our manufactures, which are so esteemed in the world, as well as so gainful at home.

"Nor can we blame any foreign nation for prohibiting the use and wearing of our manufactures, if they can either make them at home, or make any which they can shift with in their stead.

"The reason is plain. 'Tis the interest of every nation to encourage their own trade, to encourage those manufactures that will employ their own subjects, consume their own growth of provisions, as well as materials of commerce, and such as will keep their money or species at home.

"'Tis from this just principle that the French prohibit the English woollen manufacture, and the English again prohibit, or impose a tax equal to a prohibition, on the French silks, paper, linen, and several other of their manufactures. 'Tis from the same just reason in trade that we prohibit the wearing of East India wrought silks, printed calicoes, &c.; that we prohibit the importation of French brandy, Brazil sugars, and Spanish tobacco; and so of several other things."

CHAPTER VII.

DIFFICULTIES IN RE-CHANGING SIDES.

DEFOE'S unwearied zeal in the service of Harley had excited the bitterest resentment among his old allies, the Whigs. He often complained of it, more in sorrow than in anger. He had no right to look for any other treatment; it was a just punishment upon him for seeking the good of his country without respect of parties. An author that wrote from principle had a very hard task in those dangerous times. If he ventured on the dangerous precipice of telling unbiassed truth, he must expect martyrdom from both sides. The resignation of the simple single-minded patriot to the pains and penalties of honesty, naturally added to the rage of the party with whose factious proceedings he would have nothing to do; and yet it has always been thought an extraordinary instance of party spite that the Whigs should have instituted a prosecution against him, on the alleged ground that a certain remarkable series of Tracts were written in favour of the Pretender. Towards the end of 1712 Defoe had issued *A Seasonable Warning and Caution against the Insinuations of Papists and Jacobites in favour of the Pretender.* No charge of Jacobitism could be made against a pamphlet containing such a sentence as this :—

"Think, then, dear Britons! what a King this Pretender must be! a papist by inclination; a tyrant by education; a Frenchman by honour and obligation;—and how long will your liberties last you in this condition? And when your liberties are gone, how long will your religion remain? When your hands are tied; when armies bind you; when power oppresses you; when a tyrant disarms you; when a Popish French tyrant reigns over you; by what means or methods can you pretend to maintain your Protestant religion?"

A second pamphlet, *Hannibal at the Gates*, strongly urging party union and the banishment of factious spirit, was equally unmistakable in tone. The titles of the following three of the series were more startling:—*Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover—And what if the Pretender should come? or Some considerations of the advantages and real consequences of the Pretender's possessing the Crown of Great Britain—An Answer to a Question that nobody thinks of, viz. But what if the Queen should die?* The contents, however, were plainly ironical. The

main reason against the Succession of the Prince of Hanover was that it might be wise for the nation to take a short turn of a French, Popish, hereditary-right *regime* in the first place as an emetic. Emetics were good for the health of individuals, and there could be no better preparative for a healthy constitutional government than another experience of arbitrary power. Defoe had used the same ironical argument for putting Tories in office in 1708. The advantages of the Pretender's possessing the Crown were that we should be saved from all further danger of a war with France, and should no longer hold the exposed position of a Protestant State among the great Catholic Powers of Europe. The point of the last pamphlet of the series was less distinct; it suggested the possibility of the English people losing their properties, their estates, inheritance, lands, goods, lives, and liberties, unless they were clear in their own minds what course to take in the event of the Queen's death. But none of the three Tracts contain anything that could possibly be interpreted as a serious argument in favor of the Pretender. They were all calculated to support the Succession of the Elector of Hanover. Why, then, should the Whigs have prosecuted the author? It was a strange thing, as Defoe did not fail to complain, that they should try to punish a man for writing in their own interest.

The truth, however, is that although Defoe afterwards tried to convince the Whig leaders that he had written these pamphlets in their interest, they were written in the interest of Harley. They were calculated to recommend that Minister to Prince George, in the event of his accession to the English throne. We see this at once when we examine their contents by the light of the personal intrigues of the time. Harley was playing a double game. It was doubtful who the Queen's successor would be, and he aimed at making himself safe in either of the two possible contingencies. Very soon after his accession to power in 1710, he made vague overtures for the restoration of the Stuarts under guarantees for civil and religious liberty, When pressed to take definite steps in pursuance of this plan he deprecated haste, and put off and put off, till the Pretender's adherents lost patience. All the time he was making protestations of fidelity to the Court of Hanover. The increasing vagueness of his promises to the Jacobites seems to show that, as time went on, he became convinced that the Hanoverian was the winning cause. No man could better advise him as to the feeling of the English people than Defoe, who was constantly perambulating the country on secret services, in all probability for the direct purpose of sounding the general opinion. It was towards the end of 1712, by which time Harley's shilly-shallying had effectually disgusted the Jacobites, that the first of Defoe's series of Anti-Jacobite tracts appeared. It professed to be written by An Englishman at the Court of Hanover, which affords some ground, though it must be confessed slight, for supposing that Defoe had visited Hanover, presumably as the bearer of some of Harley's assurances of loyalty. The *Seasonable Warning and*

Caution was circulated, Defoe himself tells us, in thousands among the poor people by several of his friends. Here was a fact to which Harley could appeal as a circumstantial proof of his zeal in the Hanoverian cause. Whether Defoe's Anti-Jacobite tracts really served his benefactor in this way, can only be matter of conjecture. However that may be, they were upon the surface written in Harley's interest. The warning and caution was expressly directed against the insinuations that the Ministry were in favour of the Pretender. All who made these insinuations were assumed by the writer to be Papists, Jacobites, and enemies of Britain. As these insinuations were the chief war-cry of the Whigs, and we now know that they were not without foundation, it is easy to understand why Defoe's pamphlets, though Anti-Jacobite, were resented by the party in whose interest he had formerly written. He excused himself afterwards by saying that he was not aware of the Jacobite leanings of the Ministry; that none of them ever said one word in favour of the Pretender to him; that he saw no reason to believe that they did favour the Pretender. As for himself, he said, they certainly never employed him in any Jacobite intrigue. He defied his enemies to "prove that he ever kept company or had any society, friendship, or conversation with any Jacobite. So averse had he been to the interest and the people, that he had studiously avoided their company on all occasions." Within a few months of his making these protestations, Defoe was editing a Jacobite newspaper under secret instructions from a Whig Government. But this is anticipating.

That an influential Whig should have set on foot a prosecution of Defoe as the author of "treasonable libels against the House of Hanover," although the charge had no foundation in the language of the incriminated pamphlets, is intelligible enough. The Whig party writers were delighted with the prosecution, one of them triumphing over Defoe as being caught at last, and put "in Lob's pound," and speaking of him as "the vilest of all the writers that have prostituted their pens either to encourage faction, oblige a party, or serve their own mercenary ends." But that the Court of Queen's Bench, before whom Defoe was brought—with some difficulty, it would appear, for he had fortified his house at Newington like Robinson Crusoe's castle—should have unanimously declared his pamphlets to be treasonable, and that one of them, on his pleading that they were ironical, should have told him it was a kind of irony for which he might come to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, is not so easy to understand, unless we suppose that, in these tempestuous times, judges like other men were powerfully swayed by party feeling. It is possible, however, that they deemed the mere titles of the pamphlets offences in themselves, disturbing cries raised while the people were not yet clear of the forest of anarchy, and still subject to dangerous panics—offences of the same nature as if a man should shout fire in sport in a crowded theatre. Possibly, also, the severity of the Court was increased by Defoe's indiscretion in commenting upon the case in the *Review*,

while it was still *sub judice*. At any rate he escaped punishment. The Attorney-General was ordered to prosecute him, but before the trial came off Defoe obtained a pardon under the royal seal.

The Whigs were thus baulked of revenge upon their renegade. Their loyal writers attributed Defoe's pardon to the secret Jacobitism of the Ministry—quite wrongly—as we have just seen he was acting for Harley as a Hanoverian and not as a Jacobite. Curiously enough, when Defoe next came before the Queen's Bench, the instigator of the prosecution was a Tory, and the Government was Whig, and he again escaped from the clutches of the law by the favour of the Government. Till Mr. William Lee's remarkable discovery, fourteen years ago, of certain letters in Defoe's handwriting in the State Paper Office, it was generally believed that on the death of Queen Anne, the fall of the Tory Administration, and the complete discomfiture of Harley's trimming policy, the veteran pamphleteer and journalist, now fifty-three years of age, withdrew from political warfare, and spent the evening of his life in the composition of those works of fiction which have made his name immortal. His biographers had misjudged his character and underrated his energy. When Harley fell from power, Defoe sought service under the Whigs. He had some difficulty in regaining their favour, and when he did obtain employment from them, it was of a kind little to his honour.

In his *Appeal to Honour and Justice*, published early in 1715, in which he defended himself against the charges copiously and virulently urged of being a party-writer, a hireling, and a turncoat, and explained everything that was doubtful in his conduct by alleging the obligations of gratitude to his first benefactor Harley, Defoe declared that since the Queen's death he had taken refuge in absolute silence. He found, he said, that if he offered to say a word in favour of the Hanoverian settlement, it was called fawning and turning round again, and therefore he resolved to meddle neither one way nor the other. He complained sorrowfully that in spite of this resolution, and though he had not written one book since the Queen's death, a great many things were called by his name. In that case, he had no resource but to practice a Christian spirit and pray for the forgiveness of his enemies. This was Defoe's own account, and it was accepted as the whole truth, till Mr. Lee's careful research and good fortune gave a different colour to his personal history from the time of Harley's displacement.*

During the dissensions, in the last days of the Queen which broke up the Tory Ministry, *Mercator* was dropped. Defoe seems immediately to have entered into communication with the printer of the *Whig Flying Post*, one William Hurt. The owner of the *Post* was abroad at the time, but his managers, whether actuated by personal spite or reasonable suspicion, learning that Hurt was in

* In making mention of Mr. Lee's valuable researches and discoveries, I ought to add that his manner of connecting the facts for which I am indebted to him, and the construction he puts upon them, is entirely different from mine. For the view here implied of Defoe's character and motives, Mr. Lee is in no way responsible.

communication with one whom they looked upon as their enemy, decided at once to change their printer. There being no copyright in newspaper titles in those days, Hurt retaliated by engaging Defoe to write another paper under the same title, advertising that, from the arrangements he had made, readers would find the new *Flying Post* better than the old. It was in his labours on this sham *Flying Post*, as the original indignantly called it in an appeal to Hurt's sense of honour and justice against the piracy, that Defoe came into collision with the law. His new organ was warmly loyal. On the 14th of August it contained a highly-coloured panegyric of George I., which alone would refute Defoe's assertion that he knew nothing of the arts of the courtier. His Majesty was described as a combination of more graces, virtues, and capacities than the world had ever seen united in one individual, a man "born for council and fitted to command the world." Another number of the *Flying Post*, a few days afterwards, contained an attack on one of the few Tories among the Lords of the Regency, nominated for the management of affairs till the King's arrival. During Bolingbroke's brief term of ascendency, he had despatched the Earl of Anglesey on a mission to Ireland. The Earl had hardly landed at Dublin when news followed him of the Queen's death, and he returned to act as one of the Lords Regent. In the *Flying Post* Defoe asserted that the object of his journey to Ireland was "to new model the Forces there, and particularly to break no less than seventy of the honest officers of the army, and to fill up their places with the tools and creatures of Con. Phipps, and such a rabble of cut-throats as were fit for the work that they had for them to do." That there was some truth in the allegation is likely enough; Sir Constantine Phipps was, at least, shortly afterwards dismissed from his offices. But Lord Anglesey at once took action against it as a scandalous libel. Defoe was brought before the Lords Justices, and committed for trial.

He was liberated, however, on bail, and in spite of what he says about his resolution not to meddle on either side, made an energetic use of his liberty. He wrote *The Secret History of One Year*—the year after William's accession—vindicating the King's clemency towards the abettors of the arbitrary government of James, and explaining that he was compelled to employ many of them by the rapacious scrambling of his own adherents for places and pensions. The indirect bearing of this tract is obvious. In October three pamphlets came from Defoe's fertile pen; an *Advice to the People of England* to lay aside feuds and faction, and live together under the new King like good Christians; and two parts, in quick succession of a *Secret History of the White Staff*. This last work was an account of the circumstances under which the Treasurer's White Staff was taken from the Earl of Oxford, and put his conduct in a favourable light, exonerating him from the suspicion of Jacobitism, and affirming—not quite accurately as other accounts of the transaction seem to imply—that it was by Harley's advice that the Staff was committed to the Earl of

Shrewsbury. One would be glad to accept this as proof of Defoe's attachment to the cause of his disgraced benefactor; yet Harley, as he lay in the Tower awaiting his trial on an impeachment of high treason, issued a disclaimer concerning the *Secret History* and another pamphlet, entitled *An Account of the Conduct of Robert, Earl of Oxford.* These pamphlets, he said, were not written with his knowledge, or by his direction or encouragement; "on the contrary, he had reason to believe from several passages therein contained that it was the intention of the author, or authors, to do him a prejudice." This disclaimer may have been dictated by a wish not to appear wanting in respect to his judges; at any rate, Defoe's *Secret History* bears no trace on the surface of a design to prejudice him by its recital of facts. *An Appeal to Honour and Justice* was Defoe's next production. While writing it, he was seized with a violent apoplectic fit, and it was issued with a Conclusion by the Publisher, mentioning this circumstance, explaining that the pamphlet was consequently incomplete, and adding: "If he recovers, he may be able to finish what he began; if not, it is the opinion of most that know him that the treatment which he here complains of, and some others that he would have spoken of, have been the apparent cause of his disaster." There is no sign of incompleteness in the *Appeal;* and the Conclusion by the Publisher, while the author lay "in a weak and languishing condition, neither able to go on nor likely to recover, at least in any short time," gives a most artistic finishing stroke to it. Defoe never interfered with the perfection of it after his recovery, which took place very shortly. The *Appeal* was issued in the first week of January; before the end of the month the indomitable writer was ready with a Third Part of the *Secret History*, and a reply to Atterbury's *Advice to the Freeholders of England* in view of the approaching elections. A series of tracts written in the character of a Quaker quickly followed, one rebuking a Dissenting preacher for inciting the new Government to vindictive severities, another rebuking Sacheverell for hypocrisy and perjury in taking the oath of abjuration, a third rebuking the Duke of Ormond for encouraging Jacobite and High-Church mobs. In March, Defoe published his *Family Instructor*, a book of 450 pages; in July, his *History, by a Scots Gentleman in the Swedish Service, of the Wars of Charles XII.*

Formidable as the list of these works seems, it does not represent more than Defoe's average rate of production for thirty years of his life. With grave anxieties added to the strain of such incessant toil, it is no wonder that nature should have raised its protest in an apoplectic fit. Even nature must have owned herself vanquished, when she saw this very protest pressed into thes ervice of the irresistible and triumphant worker. All the time he was at large upon bail, awaiting his trial. The trial took place in July, 1715, and he was found guilty. But sentence was deferred till next term. October came round, but Defoe did not appear to receive his sentence. He had made his peace with the Govern-

ment, upon "capitulations" of which chance has preserved the record in his own handwriting. He represented privately to Lord Chief Justice Parker that he had always been devoted to the Whig interest, and that any seeming departure from it had been due to errors of judgment, not to want of attachment. Whether the Whig leaders believed this representation we do not know, but they agreed to pardon "all former mistakes" if he would now enter faithfully into their service. Though the Hanoverian succession had been cordially welcomed by the steady masses of the nation, the Mar Rebellion in Scotland and the sympathy shown with this movement in the south warned them that their enemies were not to be despised. There was a large turbulent element in the population, upon which agitators might work with fatal effect. The Jacobites had still a hold upon the Press, and the past years had been fruitful of examples of the danger of trying to crush sedition with the arm of the law. Prosecution had been proved to be the surest road to popularity. It occurred therefore that Defoe might be useful if he still passed as an opponent of the Government, insinuating himself as such into the confidence of Jacobites, obtained control of their publications, and nipped mischief in the bud. It was a dangerous and delicate service, exposing the emissary to dire revenge if he were detected, and to suspicion and misconstruction from his employers in his efforts to escape detection. But Defoe, delighting in his superior wits, and happy in the midst of dangerous intrigues, boldly undertook the task.

CHAPTER VIII.

LATER JOURNALISTIC LABOURS.

FOR the discovery of this "strange and surprising" chapter in Defoe's life, which clears up much that might otherwise have been disputable in his character, the world is indebted solely to Mr. William Lee. Accident put Mr. Lee on the right scent, from which previous biographers had been diverted by too literal and implicit a faith in the arch-deceiver's statements, and too comprehensive an application of his complaint that his name was made the hackney title of the times, upon which all sorts of low scribblers fathered their vile productions. Defoe's secret services on Tory papers exposed him, as we have seen, to misconstruction. Nobody knew this better than himself, and nobody could have guarded against it with more sleepless care. In the fourth year of King George's reign a change took place in the Ministry. Lord Townshend was succeeded in the Home Secretary's office by Lord Stanhope. Thereupon Defoe judged it expedient to write to a private secretary, Mr. de la Faye, explaining at length his position. This letter along with five others, also designed to prevent misconstruction by his employers, lay in the State Paper Office till the year 1864, when the whole packet fell into the hands of Mr. Lee. The following succinct fragment of autobiography is dated April 26, 1718.

"Though I doubt not but you have acquainted my Lord Stanhope with what humble sense of his lordship's goodness I received the account you were pleased to give me, that my little services are accepted, and that his lordship is satisfied to go upon the foot of former capitulations, etc.; yet I confess, Sir, I have been anxious upon many accounts, with respect as well to the service itself as my own safety, lest my lord may think himself ill-served by me, even when I have best performed my duty.

"I thought it therefore not only a debt to myself, but a duty to his lordship, that I should give his lordship a short account, as clear as I can, how far my former instructions empowered me to act, and in a word what this little piece of service is, for which I am so much a subject of his lordship's present favour and bounty.

"It was in the Ministry of my Lord Townshend, when my Lord Chief Justice Parker, to whom I stand obliged for the favour, was pleased so far to state my case, that notwithstanding the misrepresentations under which I had suffered, and notwithstanding some mistakes which I was the

first to acknowledge, I was so happy as to be believed in the professions I made of a sincere attachment to the interest of the present Government, and, speaking with all possible humility, I hope I have not dishonoured my Lord Parker's recommendation.

"In considering, after this, which way I might be rendered most useful to the Government, it was proposed by my Lord Townshend that I should still appear as if I were, as before, under the displeasure of the Government, and separated from the Whigs; and that I might be more serviceable in a kind of disguise than if I appeared openly; and upon this foot a weekly paper, which I was at first directed to write, in opposition to a scandalous paper called the *Shift Shifted*, was laid aside, and the first thing I engaged in was a monthly book called *Mercurius Politicus*, of which presently. In the interval of this, Dyer, the *News-Letter* writer, having been dead, and Dormer, his successor, being unable by his troubles to carry on that work, I had an offer of a share in the property, as well as in the management of that work.

"I immediately acquainted my Lord Townshend of it, who, by Mr. Buckley, let me know it would be a very acceptable piece of service; for that letter was really very prejudicial to the public, and the most difficult to come at in a judicial way in case of offence given. My lord was pleased to add, by Mr. Buckley, that he would consider my service in that case, as he afterwards did.

"Upon this I engaged in it; and that so far, that though the property was not wholly my own, yet the conduct and government of the style and news was so entirely in me, that I ventured to assure his lordship the sting of that mischievous paper should be entirely taken out, though it was granted that the style should continue Tory as it was, that the party might be amused and not set up another, which would have destroyed the design, and this part I therefore take entirely on myself still.

"This went on for a year, before my Lord Townshend went out of the office; and his lordship, in consideration of this service, made me the appointment which Mr. Buckley knows of, with promise of a further allowance as service presented.

"My Lord Sunderland, to whose goodness I had many years ago been obliged, when I was in a secret commission sent to Scotland, was pleased to approve and continue this service, and the appointment annexed; and with his lordship's approbation, I introduced myself, in the disguise of a translator of the foreign news, to be so far concerned in this weekly paper of *Mist's* as to be able to keep it within the circle of a secret management, also prevent the mischievous part of it; and yet neither Mist, or any of those concerned with him, have the least guess or suspicion by whose direction I do it.

"But here it becomes necessary to acquaint my lord (as I hinted to you, Sir), that this paper, called the *Journal*, is not in myself in property, as the other, only in management; with this express difference, that if anything happens to be put in without my knowledge, which may give offence, or if anything slips my observation which may be ill-taken, his lordship shall be sure always to know whether he has a servant to reprove or a stranger to correct.

"Upon the whole, however, this is the consequence, that by this management, the weekly *Journal* and *Dormer's Letter*, as also the *Mercurius Politicus*, which is in the same nature of management as the *Journal*, will be always kept (mistakes excepted) to pass as Tory papers and, yet be disabled and enervated, so as to do no mischief or give any offence to the Government."

Others of the tell-tale letters show us in detail how Defoe acquitted himself of his engagements to the Government—bowing, as he said, in the house of Rimmon. In one he speaks of a traitorous pamphlet which he has stopped at the press, and begs the Secretary to assure his superiors that he has the original in safe keeping, and that no eye but his own has seen it. In another he apologises for an obnoxious paragraph which had crept into *Mist's Journal*, avowing that "Mr. Mist did it, after I had looked over what he had gotten together," that he [Defoe] had no concern in it, directly or indirectly, and that he thought himself obliged to notice this, to make good what he said in his last, viz. that if any mistake happened, Lord Stanhope should always know whether he had a servant to reprove or a stranger to punish. In another he expresses his alarm at hearing of a private suit against Morphew, the printer of the *Mercurius Politicus*, for a passage in that paper, and explains, first, that the obnoxious passage appeared two years before, and was consequently covered by a capitulation giving him idemnity for all former mistakes; secondly, that the thing itself was not his, neither could any one pretend to charge it on him, and consequently it could not be adduced as proof of any failure in his duty. In another letter he gives an account of a new treaty with Mist. "I need not trouble you," he says, "with the particulars, but in a word he professes himself convinced that he has been wrong, that the Government has treated him with lenity and forbearance, and he solemnly engages to me to give no more offence. The liberties Mr. Buckley mentioned, viz. to seem on the same side as before, to rally the *Flying Post*, the Whig writers, and even the word 'Whig,' &c., and to admit foolish and trifling things in favour of the Tories. This, as I represented it to him, he agrees is liberty enough, and resolves his paper shall, for the future, amuse the Tories, but not affront the Government." If Mist should break through this understanding, Defoe hopes it will be understood that it is not his fault; he can only say that the printer's resolutions of amendment seem to be sincere.

"In pursuance also of this reformation, he brought me this morning the enclosed letter, which, indeed, I was glad to see, because, though it seems couched in terms which might have been made public, yet has a secret gall in it, and a manifest tendency to reproach the Government with partiality and injustice, and (as it acknowledges expressly) was written to serve a present turn. As this is an earnest of his just intention, I hope he will go on to your satisfaction.

"Give me leave, Sir, to mention here a circumstance which concerns myself, and which, indeed, is a little hardship upon me, viz. that I seem to merit less, when I intercept a piece of barefaced treason at the Press, than when I stop such a letter as the enclosed; because one seems to be of a kind which no man would dare to meddle with. But I would persuade myself, Sir, that stopping such notorious things is not without its good effect, particularly because, as it is true that some people are generally found who do venture to print anything that offers, so stopping them here is some discouragement and disappointment to them, and they often die in our hands.

"I speak this, Sir, as well on occasion of what you were pleased to say upon that letter which I sent you formerly about *Killing no Murder*, as upon another with verses in it, which Mr. Mist gave me yesterday; which, upon my word, is so villainous and scandalous that I scarce dare to send it without your order, and an assurance that my doing so shall be taken well, for I confess it has a peculiar insolence in it against His Majesty's person which (as blasphemous words against God) are scarce fit to be repeated."

In the last of the series (of date June 13, 1718), Defoe is able to assure his employers that "he believes the time is come when the journal, instead of affronting and offending the Government, may many ways be made serviceable to the Government; and he has Mr. M. so absolutely resigned to proper measures for it, that he is persuaded he may answer for it."

Following up the clue afforded by these letters, Mr. Lee has traced the history of *Mist's Journal* under Defoe's surveillance. Mist did not prove so absolutely resigned to proper measures as his supervisor had begun to hope. On the contrary, he had frequent fits of refractory obstinacy, and gave a good deal of trouble both to Defoe and to the Government. Between them, however, they had the poor man completely in their power. When he yielded to the importunity of his Jacobite correspondents, or kicked against the taunts of the Whig organs about his wings being clipped —they, no more than he, knew how—his secret controllers had two ways of bringing him to reason. Sometimes the Government prosecuted him, wisely choosing occasions for their displeasure on which they were likely to have popular feeling on their side. At other times Defoe threatened to withdraw and have nothing more to do with the *Journal*. Once or twice he carried this threat into execution. His absence soon told on the circulation, and Mist entreated him to return, making promises of good behaviour for the future. Further, Defoe commended himself to the gratitude of his unconscious dupe by sympathising with him in his troubles, undertaking the conduct of the paper while he lay in prison, and editing two volumes of a selection of *Miscellany Letters* from its columns. At last, however, after eight years of this partnership, during which Mist had no suspicion of Defoe's connexion with the Government, the secret somehow seems to have leaked out. Such at least is Mr. Lee's highly probable explanation of a murderous attack made by Mist upon his partner.

Defoe, of course, stoutly denied Mist's accusations, and published a touching account of the circumstances, describing his assailant as a lamentable instance of ingratitude. Here was a man whom he had saved from the gallows, and befriended at his own risk in the utmost distress, turning round upon him, "basely using, insulting, and provoking him, and at last drawing his sword upon his benefactor." Defoe disarmed him, gave him his life, and sent for a surgeon to dress his wounds. But even this was not enough. Mist would give him nothing but abuse of the grossest nature. It almost shook Defoe's faith in human nature. Was

there ever such ingratitude known before? The most curious thing is that Mr. Lee, who has brought all these facts to light, seems to share Defoe's ingenuous astonishment at this "strange instance of ungrateful violence," and conjectures that it might have proceeded from imaginary wrong of a very grievous nature, such as a suspicion that Defoe had instigated the Government to prosecute him. It is perhaps as well that it should have fallen to so loyal an admirer to exhume Defoe's secret services and public protestations; the record might otherwise have been rejected as incredible.

Mr. Lee's researches were not confined to Defoe's relations with Mist and his journal, and the other publications mentioned in the precious letter of Mr. de la Faye. Once assured that Defoe did not withdraw from newspaper-writing in 1715, he ransacked the journals of the period for traces of his hand and contemporary allusions to his labours. A rich harvest rewarded Mr. Lee's zeal. Defoe's individuality is so marked that it thrusts itself through every disguise. A careful student of the *Review*, who had compared it with the literature of the time, and learnt his peculiar tricks of style and vivid ranges of interest, could not easily be at fault in identifying a composition of any length. Defoe's incomparable clearness of statement would alone betray him; that was a gift of nature which no art could successfully imitate. Contemporaries also were quick at recognising their Proteus in his many shapes, and their gossip gives a strong support to internal evidence, resting as it probably did on evidences which were not altogether internal. Though Mr. Lee may have been rash sometimes in quoting little scraps of news as Defoe's, he must be admitted to have established that, prodigious as was the number and extent of the veteran's separate publications during the reign of the First George, it was also the most active period of his career as a journalist. Mangaing Mist and writing for his journal would have been work enough for an ordinary man; but Defoe founded, conducted, and wrote for a host of other newspapers—the monthly *Mercurius Politicus*, an octavo of sixty-four pages (1716—1720); the weekly *Dormer's News-Letter* (written, not printed, 1716—1718); the *Whitehall Evening Post* (a tri-weekly quarto-sheet, established 1718); the *Daily Post* (a daily single leaf, folio, established 1719); and *Applebee's Journal* (with which his connexion began in 1720 and ended in 1726).

The contributions to these newspapers which Mr. Lee has assigned, with great judgment it seems to me, to Defoe, range over a wide field of topics, from piracy and highway robberies to suicide and the Divinity of Christ. Defoe's own test of a good writer was that he should at once please and serve his readers, and he kept this double object in view in his newspaper writings, as much as in *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*, and the *Family Instructor*. Great as is the variety of the subjects in the selections which Mr. Lee has made upon internal evidence, they are all of them subjects in which Defoe showed a keen interest in his acknowledged works.

In providing amusement for his readers, he did not soar above his age in point of refinement; and in providing instruction, he did not fall below his age in point of morality and religion. It is a notable circumstance that one of the marks by which his contemporaries traced his hand was "the little art he is truly master of, of forging a story and imposing it on the world for truth." Of this he gave a conspicuous instance in *Mist's Journal* in an account of the marvellous blowing up of the island of St. Vincent, which in circumstantial invention and force of description must be ranked among his master-pieces. But Defoe did more than embellish stories of strange events for his newspapers. He was a master of journalistic art in all its branches, and a fertile inventor and organiser of new devices. It is to him, Mr. Lee says, and his researches entitle him to authority, that we owe the prototype of the leading article, a Letter Introductory, as it became the fashion to call it, written on some subject of general interest and placed at the comment of each number. The writer of this Letter Introductory was known as the "author" of the paper.

Another feature in journalism which Defoe greatly helped to develop, if he did not actually invent, was the Journal of Society. In the *Review* he had provided for the amusement of his readers by the device of a Scandal Club, whose transactions he professed to report. But political excitement was intense throughout the whole of Queen Anne's reign; Defoe could afford but small space for scandal, and his Club was often occupied with fighting his minor political battles. When, however, the Hanoverian succession was secured, and the land had rest from the hot strife of parties, light gossip was more in request. Newspapers became less political, and their circulation extended from the coffee-houses, inns, and ale-houses to a new class of readers. "They have of late," a writer in *Applebee's Journal* says in 1725, "been taken in much by the women, especially the political ladies, to assist at the tea-table." Defoe seems to have taken an active part in making *Mist's Journal* and *Applebee's Journal*, both Tory organs, suitable for this more frivolous section of the public. This fell in with his purpose of diminishing the political weight of these journals, and at the same time increased their sale. He converted them from rabid party agencies into registers of domestic news and vehicles of social disquisitions, sometimes grave, sometimes gay in subject, but uniformly bright and spirited in tone.

The raw materials of several of Defoe's elaborate tales, such as *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*, are to be found in the columns of *Mist's* and *Applebee's*. In connexion with *Applebee's* more particularly, Defoe went some way towards anticipating the work of the modern Special Correspondent. He apparently interviewed distinguished criminals in Newgate, and extracted from them the stories of their lives. Part of what he thus gathered he communicated to *Applebee;* sometimes, when the notoriety of the case justified it, he drew up longer narratives and published them separately as pamphlets. He was an adept in the art of puffing his

own productions, whether books or journals. It may be doubted whether any American editor ever mastered this art more thoroughly than Defoe. Nothing, for instance, could surpass the boldness of Defoe's plan for directing public attention to his narrative of the robberies and escapes of Jack Sheppard. He seems to have taken a particular interest in this daring gaol-breaker. Mr. Lee, in fact, finds evidence that he had gained Sheppard's affectionate esteem. He certainly turned his acquaintance to admirable account. He procured a letter for *Applebee's Journal* from Jack, with "kind love," and a copy of verses of his own composition. Both letter and verses probably came from a more practised pen, but, to avert suspicion, the original of the letter was declared to be on view at Applebee's, and "well known to be in the handwriting of John Sheppard." Next Defoe prepared a thrilling narrative of Jack's adventures, which was of course described as written by the prisoner himself, and printed at his particular desire. But this was not all. The artful author further arranged that when Sheppard reached his place of execution, he should send for a friend to the cart as he stood under the gibbet, and deliver a copy of the pamphlet as his last speech and dying confession. A paragraph recording this incident was duly inserted in the newspapers. It is a crowning illustration of the inventive daring with which Defoe practised the tricks of his trade.

One of Defoe's last works in connection with journalism was to write a prospectus for a new weekly periodical, the *Universal Spectator*, which was started by his son-in-law, Henry Baker, in October, 1728. There is more than internal and circumstantial evidence that this prospectus was Defoe's composition. When Baker retired from the paper five years afterwards, he drew up a list of the articles which had appeared under his editorship, with the names of the writers attached. This list has been preserved, and from it we learn that the first number, containing a prospectus and an introductory essay on the qualifications of a good writer, was written by Defoe. That experienced journalist naturally tried to give an air of novelty to the enterprise. "If this paper," the first sentence runs, "was not intended to be what no paper at present is, we should never attempt to crowd in among such a throng of public writers as at this time oppress the town." In effect the scheme of the *Universal Spectator* was to revive the higher kind of periodical essays which made the reputation of the earlier *Spectator*. Attempts to follow in the wake of Addison and Steele had for so long ceased to be features in journalism; their manner had been so effectually superseded by less refined purveyors of light literature—Defoe himself going heartily with the stream—that the revival was opportune, and in point of fact proved successful, the *Universal Spectator* continuing to exist for nearly twenty years. It shows how quickly the *Spectator* took its place among the classics, that the writer of the prospectus considered it necessary to deprecate a charge of presumption in seeming to challenge comparison.

"Let no man envy us the celebrated title we have assumed, or charge us with arrogance, as if we bid the world expect great things from us. Must we have no power to please, unless we come up to the full height of those inimitable performances? Is there no wit or humour left because they are gone? Is the spirit of the *Spectators* all lost, and their mantle fallen upon nobody? Have they said all that can be said? Has the world offered no variety, and presented no new scenes, since they retired from us? Or did they leave off, because they were quite exhausted, and had no more to say?"

Defoe did not always speak so respectfully of the authors of the *Spectator*. If he had been asked why they left off, he would probably have given the reason contained in the last sentence, and backed his opinion by contemptuous remarks about the want of fertility in the scholarly brain. He himself could have gone on producing for ever; he was never gravelled for lack of matter, had no nice ideas about manner, and was sometimes sore about the superior respectability of those who had. But here he was on business, addressing people who looked back regretfully from the vulgarity of *Mist's* and *Applebee's* to the refinement of earlier periodicals, and making a bid for their custom. A few more sentences from his advertisement will show how well he understood their prejudices:—

"The main design of this work is, to turn your thoughts a little off from the clamour of contending parties, which has so long surfeited you with their ill-timed politics, and restore your taste to things truly superior and sublime.

"In order to this, we shall endeavour to present you with such subjects as are capable, if well handled, both to divert and to instruct you; such as shall render conversation pleasant, and help to make mankind agreeable to one another.

"As for our management of them, not to promise too much for ourselves, we shall only say we hope, at least, to make our work acceptable to everybody, because we resolve, if possible, to displease nobody.

"We assure the world, by way of negative, that we shall engage in no quarrels, meddle with no parties, deal in no scandal, nor endeavour to make any men merry at the expense of their neighbours. In a word, we shall set nobody together by the ears. And though we have encouraged the ingenious world to correspond with us by letters, we hope they will not take it ill, that we say beforehand, no letters will be taken notice of by us which contain any personal reproaches, intermeddle with family breaches, or tend to scandal or indecency of any kind.

"The current papers are more than sufficient to carry on all the dirty work the town can have for them to do; and what with party strife, politics, poetic quarrels, and all the other consequences of a wrangling age, they are in no danger of wanting employment; and those readers who delight in such things, may divert themselves there. But our views, as is said above, lie another way."

Good writing is what Defoe promises the readers of the *Universal Spectator*, and this leads him to consider what particular qualifications go to the composition, or, in a word, "what is re-

quired to denominate a man a *good writer.*" His definition is worth quoting as a statement of his principles of composition.

"One says this is a polite author; another says, that is an excellent *good writer;* and generally we find some oblique strokes pointed sideways at themselves; intimating that whether we think fit to allow it or not, they take themselves to be very *good writers.* And, indeed, I must excuse them their vanity; for if a poor author had not some good opinion of himself, especially when under the discouragement of having nobody else to be of his mind, he would never write at all; nay, he could not; it would take off all the little dull edge that his pen might have on it before, and he would not be able to say one word to the purpose.

"Now whatever may be the lot of this paper, be that as common fame shall direct, yet without entering into the enquiry who writes better, or who writes worse, I shall lay down one specific, by which you that read shall impartially determine who are, or are not, to be called *good writers.* In a word, the character of a good writer, wherever he is to be found, is this, viz., that he writes so as to please and serve at the same time.

"If he writes to *please,* and not to *serve,* he is a flatterer and a hypocrite; if to *serve,* and not to *please,* he turns cynic and satirist. The first deals in smooth falsehood, the last in rough scandal; the last may do some good, though little; the first does no good, and may do mischief, not a little; the last provokes your rage, the first provokes your pride; and in a word either of them is hurtful rather than useful. But the writer that strives to be useful, writes to *serve* you, and at the same time, by an imperceptible art, draws you on to be pleased also. He represents truth with plainness, virtue with praise; he even reprehends with a softness that carries the force of a satire without the salt of it; and he insensibly screws himself into your good opinion, that as his writings merit your regard, so they fail not to obtain it.

"This is part of the character by which I define a good writer; I say 'tis but part of it, for it is not a half sheet that would contain the full description; a large volume would hardly suffice it. His fame requires indeed, a very good writer to give it due praise; and for that reason (and a good reason too) I go no farther with it."

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLACE OF DEFOE'S FICTIONS IN HIS LIFE.

THOSE of my readers who have thought of Defoe only as a writer of stories which young and old still love to read, must not be surprised that so few pages of this little book should be left for an account of his work in that field. No doubt Defoe's chief claim to the world's interest is that he is the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. But there is little to be said about this or any other of Defoe's tales in themselves. Their art is simple, unique, incommunicable, and they are too well known to need description. On the other hand, there is much that is worth knowing and not generally known about the relation of these works to his life, and the place that they occupy in the sum total of his literary activity. Hundreds of thousands since Defoe's death, and millions in ages to come, would never have heard his name but for *Robinson Crusoe*. To his contemporaries the publication of that work was but a small incident in a career which for twenty years had claimed and held their interest. People in these days are apt to imagine, because Defoe wrote the most fascinating of books for children, that he was himself simple, child-like, frank, open, and unsuspecting. He has been so described by more than one historian of literature. It was not so that he appeared to his contemporaries, and it is not so that he can appear to us when we know his life, unless we recognise that he took a child's delight in beating with their own weapons the most astute intriguers in the most intriguing period of English history.

Defoe was essentially a journalist. He wrote for the day, and for the greatest interest of the greatest number of the day. He always had some ship sailing with the passing breeze, and laden with a useful cargo for the coast upon which the wind chanced to be blowing. If the Tichborne trial had happened in his time, we should certainly have had from him an exact history of the boyhood and surprising adventures of Thomas Castro, commonly known as Sir Roger, which would have come down to us as a true record, taken, perhaps, by the chaplain of Portland prison from the convict's own lips. It would have had such an air of authenticity, and would have been corroborated by such an array of trustworthy witnesses, that nobody in later times could have doubted its truth.

Defoe always wrote what a large number of people were in a mood to read. All his writings, with so few exceptions that they may reasonably be supposed to fall within the category, were *pièces de circonstance.* Whenever any distinguished person died or otherwise engaged public attention, no matter how distinguished, whether as a politician, a criminal, or a divine, Defoe lost no time in bringing out a biography. It was in such emergencies that he produced his memoirs of Charles XII., Peter the Great, Count Patkul, the Duke of Shrewsbury, Baron de Goertz, the Rev. Daniel Williams, Captain Avery the King of the Pirates, Dominique Cartouche, Rob Roy, Jonathan Wild, Jack Sheppard, Duncan Campbell. When the day had been fixed for the Earl of Oxford's trial for high treason, Defoe issued the fictitious *Minutes of the Secret Negotiations of Mons. Mesnager* at the English Court during his ministry. We owe the *Journal of the Plague in* 1665 to a visitation which fell upon France in 1721, and caused much apprehension in England. The germ which in his fertile mind grew into *Robinson Crusoe* fell from the real adventures of Alexander Selkirk, whose solitary residence of four years on the island of Juan Fernandez was a nine days' wonder in the reign of Queen Anne. Defoe was too busy with his politics at the moment to turn it to account; it was recalled to him later on, in the year 1719, when the exploits of famous pirates had given a vivid interest to the chances of adventures in far-away islands on the American and African coasts. The *Life, Adventures, and Piracies of the famous Captain Singleton,* who was set on shore in Madagascar, traversed the continent of Africa from east to west past the sources of the Nile, and went roving again in the company of the famous Captain Avery, was produced to satisfy the same demand. Such biographies as those of *Moll Flanders* and the *Lady Roxana* were of a kind, as he himself illustrated by an amusing anecdote, that interested all times and all professions and degrees; but we have seen to what accident he owed their suggestion and probably part of their materials. He had tested the market for such wares in his Journals of Society.

In following Defoe's career, we are constantly reminded that he was a man of business, and practised the profession of letters with a shrewd eye to the main chance. He scoffed at the idea of practising it with any other object, though he had aspirations after immortal fame as much as any of his more decorous contemporaries. Like Thomas Fuller, he frankly avowed that he wrote "for some honest profit to himself." Did any man, he asked, do anything without some regard to his own advantage? Whenever he hit upon a profitable vein, he worked it to exhaustion, putting the ore into various shapes to attract different purchasers. *Robinson Crusoe* made a sensation; he immediately followed up the original story with a Second Part, and the Second Part with a volume of *Serious Reflections.* He had discovered the keenness of the public appetite for stories of the supernatural, in 1706, by means of his *True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs.*

*Veal.** When, in 1720, he undertook to write the life of the popular fortune-teller, Duncan Campbell—a puff which illustrates almost better than anything else Defoe's extraordinary ingenuity in putting a respectable face upon the most disreputable materials—he had another proof of the avidity with which people run to hear marvels. He followed up this clue with *A System of Magic, or a History of the Black Art; The Secrets of the Invisible World disclosed, or a Universal History of Apparitions;* and a humorous *History of the Devil*, in which last work he subjected *Paradise Lost*, to which Addison had drawn attention by his papers in the *Spectator*, to very sharp criticism. In his books and pamphlets on the Behaviour of Servants, and his works of more formal instruction, the *Family Instructor*, the *Plan of English Commerce*, the *Complete English Tradesman*, the *Complete English Gentleman* (his last work, left unfinished and unpublished), he wrote with a similar regard to what was for the moment in demand.

Defoe's novel-writing thus grew naturally out of his general literary trade, and had not a little in common with the rest of his abundant stock. All his productions in this line, his masterpiece, *Robinson Crusoe*, as well as what Charles Lamb calls his "secondary novels," *Captain Singleton*, *Colonel Jack*, *Moll Flanders*, and *Roxana*, were manufactured from material for which he had ascertained that there was a market; the only novelty lay in the mode of preparation. From writing biographies with real names attached to them, it was but a short step to writing biographies with fictitious names. Defoe is sometimes spoken of as the inventor of the realistic novel; realistic biography would, perhaps, be a more strictly accurate description. Looking at the character of his professed records of fact, it seems strange that he should ever have thought of writing the lives of imaginary heroes, and should not have remained content with "forging stories and imposing them on the world for truth" about famous and notorious persons in real life. The purveyors of news in those days could use without fear of detection a licence which would not be tolerated now. They could not, indeed, satisfy the public appetite for news without taking liberties with the truth. They had not special correspondents in all parts of the world, to fill their pages with reports from the spot of things seen and heard. The public had acquired the habit of looking to the press, to periodical papers and casual books and pamphlets, for information about passing events and prominent men before sufficient means had been organised for procuring information which should approximate to correctness. In such circumstances, the temptation to invent and embellish was irresistible. "Why," a paragraph-maker of the time is made to

* Mr. Lee has disposed conclusively of the myth that this tale was written to promote the sale of a dull book by one Drelincourt on the *Fear of Death*, which Mrs. Veal's ghost earnestly recommended her friend to read. It was first published separately as a pamphlet without any reference to Drelincourt. It was not printed with Drelincourt's *Fear of Death* till the fourth edition of that work, which was already popular. Further, the sale of Drelincourt does not appear to have been increased by the addition of Defoe's pamphlet to the book, and of Mrs. Veal's recommendation to the pamphlet.

say, "if we will write nothing but truth, we must bring you no news; we are bound to bring you such as we can find." Yet it was not lies but truth that the public wanted as much as they do now. Hence arose the necessity of fortifying reports with circumstantial evidence of their authenticity. Nobody rebuked unprincipled news-writers more strongly than Defoe, and no news-writer was half as copious in his guarantees for the accuracy of his information. When a report reached England that the island of St. Vincent had been blown into the air, Defoe wrote a description of the calamity, the most astonishing thing that had happened in the world "since the Creation, or at least since the destruction of the earth by water in the general Deluge," and prefaced his description by saying:—

"Our accounts of this come from so many several hands and several places that it would be impossible to bring the letters all separately into this journal; and when we had done so or attempted to do so, would leave the story confused, and the world not perfectly informed. We have therefore thought it better to give the substance of this amazing accident in one collection; making together as full and as distinct an account of the whole as we believe it possible to come at by any intelligence whatsoever, and at the close of this account we shall give some probable guesses at the natural cause of so terrible an operation."

Defoe carried the same system of vouching for the truth of his narratives by referring them to likely sources, into pamphlets and books which really served the purpose of newspapers, being written for the gratification of passing interests. The History of the Wars of Charles XII., which Mr. Lee ascribes to him, was "written by a Scot's gentleman, in the Swedish service." The short narrative of the life and death of Count Patkul was "written by the Lutheran Minister who assisted him in his last hours, and faithfully translated out of a High Dutch manuscript." M. Mesnager's minutes of his negotiations were "written by himself," and "done out of French." Defoe knew that the public would read such narratives more eagerly if they believed them to be true, and ascribed them to authors whose position entitled them to confidence. There can be little doubt that he drew upon his imagination for more than the title-pages. But why, when he had so many eminent and notorious persons to serve as his subjects, with all the advantage of bearing names about which the public were already curious, did he turn to the adventures of new and fictitious heroes and heroines? One can only suppose that he was attracted by the greater freedom of of movement in pure invention; he made the venture with *Robinson Crusoe*, it was successful, and he repeated it. But after the success of *Robinson Crusoe*, he by no means abandoned his old fields. It was after this that he produced autobiographies and other *primâ facie* authentic lives of notorious thieves and pirates. With all his records of heroes, real or fictitious, he practised the same devices for ensuring credibility. In all alike he took for granted that the first question people would ask about a story was whether it was

true. The novel, it must be remembered, was then in its infancy, and Defoe, as we shall presently see, imagined, probably not without good reason, that his readers would disapprove of story-telling for the mere pleasure of the thing, as an immorality.

In writing, for the entertainment of his own time, Defoe took the surest way of writing for the entertainment of all time. Yet if he had never chanced to write *Robinson Crusoe*, he would now have a very obscure place in English literature. His "natural infirmity of homely plain writing," as he humorously described it, might have drawn students to his works, but they ran considerable risk of lying in utter oblivion. He was at war with the whole guild of respectable writers who have become classics; they despised him as an illiterate fellow, a vulgar huckster, and never alluded to him except in terms of contempt. He was not slow to retort their civilities; but the retorts might very easily have sunk beneath the waters, while the assaults were preserved by their mutual support. The vast mass of Defoe's writing received no kindly aid from distinguished contemporaries to float them down the stream; everything was done that bitter dislike and supercilious indifference could do to submerge them. *Robinson Crusoe* was their sole life-buoy.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the vitality of *Robinson Crusoe* is a happy accident, and that others of Defoe's tales have as much claim in point of merit to permanence. *Robinson Crusoe* has lived longest, because it lives most, because it was detached as it were from its own time and organised for separate existence. It is the only one of Defoe's tales that shows what he could do as an artist. We might have seen from the others that he had the genius of a great artist; here we have the possibility realised, the convincing proof of accomplished work. *Moll Flanders* is in some respects superior as a novel. Moll is a much more complicated character than the simple, open-minded, manly mariner of York; a strangely mixed compound of craft and impulse, selfishness and generosity—in short, a thoroughly bad woman, made bad by circumstances. In tracing the vigilant resolution with which she plays upon human weakness, the spasms of compunction which shoot across her wily designs, the selfish after thoughts which paralyse her generous impulses, her fits of dare-devil courage and uncontrollable panic, and the steady current of good-humoured satisfaction with herself which makes her chuckle equally over mishaps and successes, Defoe has gone much more deeply into the springs of action, and sketched a much richer page in the natural history of his species than in *Robinson Crusoe.* True, it is a more repulsive page, but that is not the only reason why it has fallen into comparative oblivion, and exists as a parasite upon the more popular work. It is not equally well constructed for the struggle of existence among books. No book can live for ever which is not firmly organised round some central principle of life, and that principle in itself imperishable. It must have a heart and members; the members must be soundly compacted and the heart superior to decay. Compared with *Robinson*

Crusoe, Moll Flanders is only a string of diverting incidents, the lowest type of book organism, very brilliant while it is fresh and new, but not qualified to survive competitors for the world's interests. There is no unique creative purpose in it to bind the whole together; it might be cut into pieces, each capable of wriggling amusingly by itself. The gradual corruption of the heroine's virtue, which is the encompassing scheme of the tale, is too thin as well as too common an artistic envelope; the incidents burst through it at so many points that it becomes a shapeless mass. But in *Robinson Crusoe* we have real growth from a vigorous germ. The central idea round which the tale is organised, the position of a man cast ashore on a desert island, abandoned to his own resources, suddenly shot beyond help or counsel from his fellow-creatures, is one that must live as long as the uncertainty of human life.

The germ of *Robinson Crusoe*, the actual experience of Alexander Selkirk, went floating about for several years, and more than one artist dallied with it, till it finally settled and took root in the mind of the one man of his generation most capable of giving it a home and working out its artistic possibilities. Defoe was the only man of letters in his time who might have been thrown on a desert island without finding himself at a loss what to do. The art required for developing the position in imagination was not of a complicated kind, and yet it is one of the rarest of gifts. Something more was wanted than simply conceiving what a man in such a situation would probably feel and probably do. Above all, it was necessary that his perplexities should be unexpected, and his expedients for meeting them unexpected; yet both perplexities and expedients so real and life-like that, when we were told them, we should wonder we had not thought of them before. One gift was indispensable for this, however many might be accessory, the genius of circumstantial invention—not a very exalted order of genius, perhaps, but quite as rare as any other intellectual prodigy.*

Defoe was fifty-eight years old when he wrote *Robinson Crusoe*. If the invention of plausible circumstances is the great secret in the art of that tale, it would have been a marvellous thing if this had been the first instance of its exercise, and it had broken out suddenly in a man of so advanced an age. When we find an artist of supreme excellence in any craft, we generally find that he has been practising it all his life. To say that he has a genius for it, means that he has practised it, and concentrated his main force upon it, and that he has been driven irresistibly to do so by sheer bent of nature. It was so with Defoe and his power of circumstantial invention, his unrivalled genius for "lying like truth." For years upon years of his life it had been his chief occupation. From the time of his first connexion with Harley, at least, he had addressed his countrymen through the press, and had perambulated the length and breadth of the land in assumed characters and on factitious pretexts. His first essay in that way in 1704, when he

* Mr. Leslie Stephen seems to me to underrate the rarity of this peculiar gift, in his brilliant essay on Defoe's novels in *Hours in a Library*.

left prison in the service of the Government, appealing to the general compassion because he was under government displeasure, was skilful enough to suggest great native genius if not extensive previous practice. There are passages of circumstantial invention in the *Review*, as ingenious as anything in *Robinson Crusoe;* and the mere fact that at the end of ten years of secret service under successive Governments, and in spite of a widespread opinion of his untrustworthiness, he was able to pass himself off for ten years more as a Tory with Tories and with the Whig Government as a loyal servant, is a proof of sustained ingenuity of invention greater than many volumes of fiction.

Looking at Defoe's private life, it is not difficult to understand the peculiar fascination which such a problem as he solved in *Robinson Crusoe* must have had for him. It was not merely that he had passed a life of uncertainty, often on the verge of precipices, and often saved from ruin by a buoyant energy which seems almost miraculous; not merely that, as he said of himself in one of his diplomatic appeals for commiseration,

> "No man hath tasted differing fortunes more,
> For thirteen times have I been rich and poor."

But when he wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, it was one of the actual chances of his life, and by no means a remote one, that he might be cast all alone on an uninhabited island. We see from his letters to De la Faye how fearful he was of having "mistakes" laid to his charge by the Government in the course of his secret services. His former changes of party had exposed him, as he well knew, to suspicion. A false step, a misunderstood paragraph, might have had ruinous consequences for him. If the Government had prosecuted him for writing anything offensive to them, refusing to believe that it was put in to amuse the Tories, transportation might very easily have been the penalty. He had made so many enemies in the Press that he might have been transported without a voice being raised in his favour, and the mob would not have interfered to save a Government spy from the plantations. Shipwreck among the islands of the West Indies was a possibility that stood not far from his own door, as he looked forward into the unknown, and prepared his mind, as men in dangerous situations do, for the worst. When he drew up for Moll Flanders and her husband a list of the things necessary for starting life in a new country, or when he described Colonel Jack's management of his plantation in Virginia, the subject was one of more than general curiosity to him; and when he exercised his imagination upon the fate of Robinson Crusoe, he was contemplating a fate which a few movements of the wheel of Fortune might make his own.

But whatever it was that made the germ idea of *Robinson Crusoe* take root in Defoe's mind, he worked it out as an artist. Artists of a more emotional type might have drawn much more elaborate and affecting word-pictures of the mariner's feelings in

various trying situations, gone much deeper into his changing moods, and shaken our souls with pity and terror over the solitary castaway's alarms and fits of despair. Defoe's aims lay another way. His Crusoe is not a man given to the luxury of grieving. If he had begun to pity himself, he would have been undone. Perhaps Defoe's imaginative force was not of a kind that could have done justice to the agonies of a shipwrecked sentimentalist; he has left no proof that it was; but if he had represented Crusoe bemoaning his misfortunes, brooding over his fears, or sighing with Ossianic sorrow over his lost companions and friends, he would have spoiled the consistency of the character. The lonely man had his moments of panic and his days of dejection, but they did not dwell in his memory. Defoe no doubt followed his own natural bent, but he also showed true art in confining Crusoe's recollections as closely as he does to his efforts to extricate himself from difficulties that would have overwhelmed a man of softer temperament. The subject had fascinated him, and he found enough in it to engross his powers without travelling beyond its limits for diverting episodes, as he does more or less in all the rest of his tales. The diverting episodes in *Robinson Crusoe* all help the verisimilitude of the story.

When, however, the ingenious inventor had completed the story artistically, carried us through all the outcast's anxieties and efforts, and shown him triumphant over all difficulties, prosperous, and again in communication with the outer world, the spirit of the literary trader would not let the finished work alone. The story, as a work of art, ends with Crusoe's departure from the island, or at any rate with his return to England. Its unity is then complete. But Robinson Crusoe at once became a popular hero, and Defoe was too keen a man of business to miss the chance of further profit from so lucrative a vein. He did not mind the sneers of hostile critics. They made merry over the trifling inconsistencies in the tale. How, for example, they asked, could Crusoe have stuffed his pockets with biscuits when he had taken off all his clothes before swimming to the wreck? How could he have been at such a loss for clothes after those he had put off were washed away by the rising tide, when he had the ship's stores to choose from? How could he have seen the goat's eyes in the cave when it was pitch dark? How could the Spaniards give Friday's father an agreement in writing, when they had neither paper nor ink? How did Friday come to know so intimately the habits of bears, the bear not being a denizen of the West Indian island? On the ground of these and such-life trifles, one critic declared that the book seems calculated for the mob, and will not bear the eye of a rational reader, and that "all but the very canaille are satisfied of the worthlessness of the performance." Defoe, we may suppose, was not much moved by these strictures, as edition after edition of the work was demanded. He corrected one or two little inaccuracies, and at once set about writing a Second Part, and a volume of *Serious Reflections* which had occurred to Crusoe amidst his

adventures. These were purely commercial excrescences upon the original work. They were popular enough at the time, but those who are tempted now to accompany Crusoe in his second visit to his island and his enterprising travels in the East, agree that the Second Part is of inferior interest to the first, and very few now read the *Serious Reflections*.

The *Serious Reflections*, however, are well worth reading in connexion with the author's personal history. In the preface we are told that *Robinson Crusoe* is an allegory, and in one of the chapters we are told why it is an allegory. The explanation is given in a homily against the vice of talking falsely. By talking falsely the moralist explains that he does not mean telling lies, that is, falsehoods concocted with an evil object; these he puts aside as sins altogether beyond the pale of discussion. But there is a minor vice of falsehood which he considers it his duty to reprove, namely, telling stories, as too many people do, merely to amuse. "This supplying a story by invention," he says, "is certainly a most scandalous crime, and yet very little regarded in that part. It is a sort of lying that makes a great hole in the heart, in which by degrees a habit of lying enters in. Such a man comes quickly up to a total disregarding the truth of what he says, looking upon it as a trifle, a thing of no import, whether any story he tells be true or not." How empty a satisfaction is this "purchased at so great an expense as that of conscience, and of a dishonour done to truth!" And the crime is so entirely objectless. A man who tells a lie, properly so called, has some hope of reward by it. But to lie for sport is to play at shuttlecock with your soul, and load your conscience for the mere sake of being a fool. "With what temper should I speak of those people? What words can express the meanness and baseness of the mind that can do this?" In making this protest against frivolous story-telling, the humour of which must have been greatly enjoyed by his journalistic colleagues, Defoe anticipated that his readers would ask why, if he so disapproved of the supplying a story by invention, he had written *Robinson Crusoe*. His answer was that *Robinson Crusoe* was an allegory, and that the telling or writing a parable or an allusive allegorical history is quite a different case. "I, Robinson Crusoe, do affirm that the story, though allegorical, is also historical, and that it is the beautiful representation of a life of unexampled misfortunes, and of a variety not to be met with in this world." This life was his own. He explains at some length the particulars of the allegory:—

"Thus the fright and fancies which succeeded the story of the print of a man's foot, and surprise of the old goat, and the thing rolling on my bed, and my jumping up in a fright, are all histories and real stories; as are likewise the dream of being taken by messengers, being arrested by officers, the manner of being driven on shore by the surge of the sea, the ship on fire, the description of starving, the story of my man Friday, and many more most natural passages observed here, and on which any religious reflections are made, are all historical and true in fact. It is most

real that I had a parrot, and taught it to call me by my name, such a servant a savage and afterwards a Christian, and that his name was called Friday, and that he was ravished from me by force, and died in the hands that took him, which I represent by being killed; this is all literally true; and should I enter into discoveries many alive can testify them. His other conduct and assistance to me also have just references in all their parts to the helps I had from that faithful savage in my real solitudes and disasters.

"The story of the bear in the tree, and the fight with the wolves in the snow, is likewise matter of real history; and in a word, the adventures of Robinson Crusoe are a whole scheme of a life of twenty-eight years spent in the most wandering, desolate, and afflicting circumstances that ever man went through, and in which I have lived so long in a life of wonders, in continued storms, fought with the worst kind of savages and man-eaters, by unaccountable surprising incidents; fed by miracles greater than that of the ravens, suffered all manner of violences and oppressions, injurious reproaches, contempt of men, attacks of devils, corrections from Heaven, and oppositions on earth; and had innumerable ups and downs in matters of fortune, been in slavery worse than Turkish, escaped by an exquisite management, as that in the story of Xury and the boat of Sallee, been taken up at sea in distress, raised again and depressed again, and that oftener perhaps in one man's life than ever was known before; shipwrecked often, though more by land than by sea; in a word, there is not a circumstance in the imaginary story but has its just allusion to a real story, and chimes part for part, and step for step, with the inimitable life of Robinson Crusoe."

But if Defoe had such a regard for the strict and literal truth, why did he not tell his history in his own person? Why convey the facts allusively in an allegory; To this question also he had an answer. He wrote for the instruction of mankind, for the purpose of recommending "invincible patience under the worst of misery; indefatigable application and undaunted resolution under the greatest and most discouraging circumstances."

"Had the common way of writing a man's private history been taken, and I had given you the conduct or life of a man you knew, and whose misfortunes and infirmities perhaps you had sometimes unjustly triumphed over, all I could have said would have yielded no diversion, and perhaps scarce have obtained a reading, or at best no attention; the teacher, like a greater, having no honour in his own country."

For all Defoe's profession that *Robinson Crusoe* is an allegory of his own life, it would be rash to take what he says too literally. The reader who goes to the tale in search of a close allegory, in minute chronological correspondence with the facts of the alleged original, will find, I expect, like myself, that he has gone on a wild-goose chase. There is a certain general correspondence. Defoe's own life is certainly as instructive as Crusoe's in the lesson of invincible patience and undaunted resolution. The shipwreck perhaps corresponds with his first bankruptcy, with which it coincides in point of time, having happened just twenty-eight years before. If Defoe had a real man Friday, who had learned all his arts till

he could practice them as well as himself, the fact might go to explain his enormous productiveness as an author. But I doubt whether the allegory can be pushed into such details. Defoe's fancy was quick enough to give an allegorical meaning to any tale. He might have found in Moll Flanders, with her five marriages and ultimate prostitution, corresponding to his own five political marriages and the dubious conduct of his later years, a closer allegory in some respects than in the life of the shipwrecked sailor. The idea of calling *Robinson Crusoe* an allegory was in all probability an after-thought, perhaps suggested by a derisive parody which had appeared, entitled *The life and strange surprising adventures of Daniel de Foe, of London, Hosier, who lived all alone in the uninhabited island of Great Britain*, and so forth.

If we study any writing of Defoe's in connexion with the circumstances of its production, we find that it is manysided in its purposes, as full of side aims as a nave is full of spokes. These supplementary moral chapters to *Robinson Crusoe*, admirable as the reflections are in themselves, and naturally as they are made to arise out of the incidents of the hero's life, contain more than meets the eye till we connect them with the author's position. Calling the tale an allegory served him in two ways. In the first place, it added to the interest of the tale itself by presenting it in the light of a riddle, which was left but half-revealed, though he declared after such explanation as he gave that "the riddle was now expounded, and the intelligent reader might see clearly the end and design of the whole work." In the second place, the allegory was such an image of his life as he wished, for good reasons, to impress on the public mind. He had all along, as we have seen, while in the secret service of successive governments, vehemently protested his independence, and called Heaven and Earth to witness that he was a poor struggling, unfortunate, calumniated man. It was more than ever necessary now when people believed him to be under the insuperable displeasure of the Whigs, and he was really rendering them such dangerous service in connexion with the Tory journals, that he should convince the world of his misfortunes and his honesty. The *Serious Reflections* consist mainly of meditations on Divine Providence in times of trouble, and discourses on the supreme importance of honest dealing. They are put into the mouth of Robinson Crusoe, but the reader is warned that they occurred to the author himself in the midst of real incidents in his own life. Knowing what public repute said of him, he does not profess never to have strayed from the paths of virtue, but he implies that he is sincerely repentant, and is now a reformed character. "Wild wicked Robinson Crusoe does not pretend to honesty himself." He acknowledges his early errors. Not to do so would be a mistaken piece of false bravery. "All shame is cowardice. The bravest spirit is the best qualified for a penitent. He, then, that will be honest, must dare to confess that he has been a knave." But the man that has been sick is half a physician, and therefore he is both well fitted to counsel others,

and being convinced of the sin and folly of his former errors, is of all men the least likely to repeat them. Want of courage was not a feature in Defoe's diplomacy. He thus boldly described the particular form of dishonesty with which, when he wrote the description, he was practising upon the unconscious Mr. Mist.

"There is an ugly word called cunning, which is very pernicious to it [honesty], and which particularly injures it by hiding it from our discovery and making it hard to find. This is so like honesty that many a man has been deceived with it, and have taken one for t'other in the markets: nay, I have heard of some who have planted this *wild honesty*, as we may call it, in their own ground, have made use of it in their friendship and dealings, and thought it had been the true plant. But they always lost credit by it, and that was not the worst neither, for they had the loss who dealt with them, and who chaffered for a counterfeit commodity; and we find many deceived so still, which is the occasion there is such an outcry about false friends, and about sharping and tricking in men's ordinary dealings with the world."

A master-mind in the art of working a man, as Bacon calls it, is surely apparent here. Who could have suspected the moralist of concealing the sins he was inclined to, by exposing and lamenting those very sins? There are other passages in the *Serious Reflections* which seem to have been particularly intended for Mist's edification. In reflecting what a fine thing honesty is, Crusoe expresses an opinion that it is much more common than is generally supposed, and gratefully recalls how often he has met with it in his own experience. He asks the reader to note how faithfully he was served by the English sailor's widow, the Portuguese captain, the boy Xury, and his man Friday. From these allegoric types, Mist might select a model for his own behaviour. When we consider the tone of these *Serious Reflections*, so eminently pious, moral, and unpretending, so obviously the outcome of a wise, simple, ingenuous nature, we can better understand the fury with which Mist turned upon Dofoe when at last he discovered his treachery. They are of use also in throwing light upon the prodigious versatility which could dash off a masterpiece in fiction, and, before the printer's ink was dry, be already at work making it a subordinate instrument in a much wider and more wonderful scheme of activity, his own restless life.

It is curious to find among the *Serious Reflections* a passage which may be taken as an apology for the practices into which Defoe, gradually, we may reasonably believe, allowed himself to fall. The substance of the apology has been crystallized into an aphorism by the author of Becky Sharp, but it has been, no doubt, the consoling philosophy of dishonest persons not altogether devoid of conscience in all ages.

"Necessity makes an honest man a knave; and if the world was to be the judge, according to the common received notion, there would not be an honest poor man alive.

"A rich man is an honest man, no thanks to him, for he would be a double knave to cheat mankind when he had no need of it. He has no occasion to prey upon his integrity, nor so much as to touch upon the borders of dishonesty. Tell me of a man that is a very honest man; for he pays everybody punctually, runs into nobody's debt, does no man any wrong; very well, what circumstances is he in? Why, he has a good estate, a fine yearly income, and no business to do. The Devil must have full possession of this man, if he should be a knave; for no man commits evil for the sake of it; even the Devil himself has some farther design in sinning, than barely the wicked part of it. No man is so hardened in crimes as to commit them for the mere pleasure of the fact; there is always some vice gratified; ambition, pride, or avarice makes rich men knaves, and necessity the poor."

This is Defoe's excuse for his backslidings put into the mouth of *Robinson Crusoe.* It might be inscribed also on the threshold of each of his fictitious biographies. Colonel Jack, Moll Flanders, Roxana, are not criminals from malice; they do not commit crimes for the mere pleasure of the fact. They all believe that but for the force of circumstances they might have been orderly, contented, virtuous members of society.

A Colonel, a London Arab, a child of the criminal regiment, began to steal before he knew that it was not the approved way of making a livelihood. Moll and Roxana were overreached by acts against which they were too weak to cope. Even after they were tempted into taking the wrong turning, they did not pursue the downward road without compunction. Many good people might say of them, "There, but for the grace of God, goes myself." But it was not from the point of view of a Baxter or a Bunyan that Defoe regarded them, though he credited them with many edifying reflections. He was careful to say that he would never have written the stories of their lives, if he had not thought that they would be useful as awful examples of the effects of bad education and the indulgence of restlessness and vanity; but he enters into their ingenious shifts and successes with a joyous sympathy that would have been impossible if their reckless adventurous living by their wits had not had a strong charm for him. We often find peeping out in Defoe's writings that roguish cynicism which we should expect in a man whose own life was so far from being straightforward. He was too much dependent upon the public acceptance of honest professions to be eager in depreciating the value of the article, but when he found other people protesting disinterested motives, he could not always resist reminding them that they were no more disinterested than the Jack-pudding who avowed that he cured diseases from mere love of his kind. Having yielded to circumstances himself, and finding life enjoyable in dubious paths, he had a certain animosity against those who had maintained their integrity and kept to the highroad, and a corresponding pleasure in showing that the motives of the sinner were not after all so very different from the motives of the saint.

The aims in life of Defoe's thieves and pirates are at bottom very little different from the ambition which he undertakes to direct in the *Complete English Tradesman*, and their maxims of conduct have much in common with this ideal. Self-interest is on the look-out, and Self-reliance at the helm.

"A tradesman behind his counter must have no flesh and blood about him, no passions, no resentment; he must never be angry—no, not so much as seem to be so, if a customer tumbles him five hundred pounds' worth of goods, and scarce bids money for anything; nay, though they really come to his shop with no intent to buy, as many do, only to see what is to be sold, and though he knows they cannot be better pleased than they are at some other shop where they intend to buy, 'tis all one; the tradesman must take it, he must place it to the account of his calling, that 'tis his business to be ill-used, and resent nothing; and so must answer as obligingly to those who give him an hour or two's trouble, and buy nothing, as he does to those who, in half the time, lay out ten or twenty pounds. The case is plain; and if some do give him trouble, and do not buy, others make amends and do buy; and as for the trouble, 'tis the business of the shop."

All Defoe's heroes and heroines are animated by this practical spirit, this thoroughgoing subordination of means to ends. When they have an end in view, the plunder of a house, the capture of a ship, the ensnaring of a dupe, they allow neither passion, nor resentment, nor sentiment in any shape or form to stand in their way. Every other consideration is put on one side when the business of the shop has to be attended to. They are all tradesmen who have strayed into unlawful courses. They have nothing about them of the heroism of sin; their crimes are not the result of ungovernable passion, or even of antipathy to conventional restraints; circumstances and not any law-defying bias of disposition have made them criminals. How is it that the novelist contrives to make them so interesting? Is it because we are a nation of shopkeepers, and enjoy following lines of business which are a little out of our ordinary routine? Or is it simply that he makes us enjoy their courage and cleverness without thinking of the purposes with which these qualities are displayed? Defoe takes such delight in tracing their bold expedients, their dexterous intriguing and manœuvring, that he seldom allows us to think of anything but the success or failure of their enterprises. Our attention is concentrated on the game, and we pay no heed for the moment to the players or the stakes. Charles Lamb says of *The Complete English Tradesman* that "such is the bent of the book to narrow and to degrade the heart, that if such maxims were as catching and infectious as those of a licentious cast, which happily is not the case, had I been living at that time, I certainly should have recommended to the grand jury of Middlesex, who presented the Fable of the Bees, to have presented this book of Defoe's in preference, as of a far more vile and debasing tendency. Yet if Defoe had thrown the substance of this book into the form of a novel, and shown us a tradesman

rising by the sedulous practice of its maxims from errand-boy to gigantic capitalist, it would have hardly been less interesting than his lives of successful thieves and tolerably successful harlots, and its interest would have been very much of the same kind, the interest of dexterous adaptation of means to ends.

CHAPTER X.

HIS MYSTERIOUS END.

"THE best step," Defoe says, after describing the character of a deceitful talker, "such a man can take is to lie on, and this shows the singularity of the crime; it is a strange expression, but I shall make it out; their way is, I say, to lie on till their character is completely known, and then they can lie no longer, for he whom nobody deceives can deceive nobody, and the essence of lying is removed; for the description of a lie is that it is spoken to deceive, or the design is to deceive. Now he that nobody believes can never lie any more, because nobody can be deceived by him."

Something like this seems to have happened to Defoe himself. He touched the summit of his worldly prosperity about the time of the publication of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). He was probably richer then than when he enjoyed the confidence of King William, and was busy with projects of manufacture and trade. He was no longer solitary in journalism. Like his hero, he had several plantations, and companions to help him in working them. He was connected with four journals, and from this source alone his income must have been considerable. Besides this, he was producing separate works at the rate, on an average, of six a year, some of them pamphlets, some of them considerable volumes, all of them calculated to the wants of the time, and several of them extremely popular, running through three or four editions in as many months. Then he had his salary from the Government, which he delicately hints at in one of his extant letters as being over-due. Further, the advertisement of a lost pocket-book in 1726, containing a list of Notes and Bills in which Defoe's name twice appears, seems to show that he still found time for commercial transactions outside literature.* Altogether Defoe was exceedingly prosperous, dropped all pretence of poverty, built a large house at Stoke Newington, with stables and pleasure-grounds, and kept a coach.

We get a pleasant glimpse of Defoe's life at this period from the notes of Henry Baker, the naturalist, who married one of his daughters and received his assistance, as we have seen, in starting *The Universal Spectator*. Baker, originally a bookseller, in 1724 set up a school for the deaf and dumb at Newington. There, ac-

* *Lee's Life*, vol. i. pp. 406-7.

cording to the notes which he left of his courtship, he made the acquaintance of "Mr. Defoe, a gentleman well known by his writings, who had newly built there a very handsome house, as a retirement from London, and amused his time either in the cultivation of a large and pleasant garden, or in the pursuit of his studies, which he found means of making very profitable." Defoe "was now at least sixty years of age, afflicted with the gout and stone, but retained all his mental faculties entire." The diarist goes on to say that he "met usually at the tea-table his three lovely daughters, who were admired for their beauty, their education, and their prudent conduct; and if sometimes if Mr. Defoe's disorders made company inconvenient, Mr. Baker was entertained by them either singly or together, and that commonly in the garden when the weather was favourable." Mr. Baker fixed his choice on Sophia, the youngest daughter, and, being a prudent lover, began negotiations about the marriage portion, Defoe's part in which is also characteristic. "He knew nothing of Mr. Defoe's circumstances, only imagined, from his very genteel way of living, that he must be able to give his daughter a decent portion; he did not suppose a large one. On speaking to Mr. Defoe, he sanctioned his proposals, and said he hoped he should be able to give her a certain sum specified; but when urged to the point some time afterwards, his answer was that formal articles he thought unnecessary; that he could confide in the honour of Mr. Baker; that when they talked before, he did not know the true state of his own affairs; that he found he could not part with any money at present; but at his death his daughter's portion would be more than he had promised; and he offered his own bond as security." The prudent Mr. Baker would not take his bond, and the marriage was not arranged till two years afterwards, when Defoe gave a bond for £500 payable at his death, engaging his house at Newington as security.

Very little more is known about Defoe's family, except that his eldest daughter married a person of the name of Langley, and that he speculated successfully in South Sea Stock in the name of his second daughter, and afterwards settled upon her an estate at Colchester worth £1020. His second son, named Benjamin, became a journalist, was the editor of the *London Journal*, and got into temporary trouble for writing a scandalous and seditious libel in that newspaper in 1721. A writer in *Applebee's Journal*, whom Mr. Lee identifies with Defoe himself, commenting upon this circumstance, denied the rumour of its being the well-known Daniel Defoe that was committed for the offence. The same writer declared that it was known "that the young Defoe was but a stalking-horse and a tool, to bear the lash and the pillory in their stead, for his wages; that he was the author of the most scandalous part, but was only made sham proprietor of the whole, to screen the true proprietors from justice.

This son does not appear in a favourable light in the troubles which soon after fell upon Defoe, when Mist discovered his connexion with the Government. Foiled in his assault upon him,

Mist seems to have taken revenge by spreading the fact abroad, and all Defoe's indignant denials and outcries against Mist's ingratitude do not seem to have cleared him from suspicion. Thenceforth the printers and editors of journals held aloof from him. Such is Mr. Lee's fair interpretation of the fact that his connexion with *Applebee's Journal* terminated abruptly in March, 1726, and that he is found soon after, in the preface to a pamphlet on *Street Robberies*, complaining that none of the journals will accept his communications. "Assure yourself, gentle reader," he says,* "I had not published my project in this pamphlet, could I have got it inserted in any of the journals without feeing the journalists or publishers. I cannot but have the vanity to think they might as well have inserted what I send them, *gratis*, as many things I have since seen in their papers. But I have not only had the mortification to find what I sent rejected, but to lose my originals, not having taken copies of what I wrote." In this preface Defoe makes touching allusion to his age and infirmities. He begs his readers to "excuse the vanity of an over-officious old man, if, like Cato, he inquires whether or no before he goes hence and is no more, he can yet do anything for the service of his country." "The old man cannot trouble you long; take, then, in good part his best intentions, and impute his defects to age and weakness."

This preface was written in 1728; what happened to Defoe in the following year is much more difficult to understand, and is greatly complicated by a long letter of his own which has been preserved. Something had occurred, or was imagined by him to have occurred, which compelled him to fly from his home and go into hiding. He was at work on a book to be entitled *The Complete English Gentleman.* Part of it was already in type when he broke off abruptly in September, 1729, and fled. In August, 1730, he sent from a hiding-place, cautiously described as being about two miles from Greenwich, a letter to his son-in-law, Baker, which is our only clue to what had taken place. It is so incoherent as to suggest that the old man's prolonged toils and anxieties had at last shaken his reason, though not his indomitable self-reliance. Baker apparently had written complaining that he was debarred from seeing him. "Depend upon my sincerity for this," Defoe answers, "that I am far from debarring you. On the contrary, it would be a greater comfort to me than any I now enjoy that I could have your agreeable visits with safety, and could see both you and my dear Sophia, could it be without giving her the grief of seeing her father *in tenebris*, and under the load of insupportable sorrows." He gives a touching description of the griefs which are preying upon his mind.

"It is not the blow I received from a wicked, perjured, and contemptible enemy that has broken in upon my spirit; which, as she well knows, has carried me on through greater disasters than these. But it has been the injustice, unkindness, and, I must say inhuman, dealing of my own

* Lee's *Life*, vol. i. p. 418.

son, which has both ruined my family, and in a word has broken my heart. . . . I depended upon him, I trusted him, I gave up my two dear unprovided children into his hands; but he has no compassion, but suffers them and their poor dying mother to beg their bread at his door, and to crave, as it were an alms, what he is bound under hand and seal, besides the most sacred promises, to supply them with, himself at the same time living in a profusion of plenty. It is too much for me. Excuse my infirmity, I can say no more; my heart is too full. I only ask one thing of you as a dying request. Stand by them when I am gone, and let them not be wronged while he is able to do them right. Stand by them as a brother; and if you have anything within you owing to my memory, who have bestowed on you the best gift I have to give, let them not be injured and trampled on by false pretences and unnatural reflections. I hope they will want no help but that of comfort and council; but that they will indeed want, being too easy to be managed by words and promises."

The postscript to the letter shows that Baker had written to him about selling the house, which, it may be remembered, was the security for Mrs. Baker's portion, and had inquired about a policy of assurance. "I wrote you a letter some months ago, in answer to one from you, about selling the house; but you never signified to me whether you received it. I have not the policy of assurance; I suppose my wife, or Hannah, may have it." Baker's ignoring the previous letter about the house seems to signify that it was unsatisfactory. He apparently wished for a personal interview with Defoe. In the beginning of the present letter Defoe had said that, though far from debarring a visit from his son-in-law, circumstances, much to his sorrow, made it impossible that he could receive a visit from anybody. After the charge against his son, which we have quoted, he goes on to explain that it is impossible for him to go to see Mr. Baker. His family apparently had been ignorant of his movements for some time. "I am at a distance from London, in Kent; nor have I a lodging in London, nor have I been at that place in the Old Bailey since I wrote you I was removed from it. At present I am weak, having had some fits of a fever that has left me low." He suggests, indeed, a plan by which he might see his son-in-law and daughter. He could not bear to make them a single flying visit. "Just to come and look at you and retire immediately, 'tis a burden too heavy. The parting will be a price beyond the enjoyment. But if they could find a retired lodging for him at Enfield, "where he might not be known, and might have the comfort of seeing them both now and then, upon such a circumstance he could gladly give the days to solitude to have the comfort of half an hour now and then with them both for two or three weeks." Nevertheless, as if he considered this plan out of the question, he ends with a touching expression of grief that, being near his journey's end, he may never see them again. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that he did not wish to see his son-in-law, and that Baker wished to see him about money matters, and suspected him of evading an interview.

Was this evasion the cunning of incipient madness? Was his concealing his hiding-place from his son-in-law an insane development of that self-reliant caution, which for so many years of his life he had been compelled to make a habit, in the face of the most serious risks? Why did he give such an exaggerated colour to the infamous conduct of his son? It is easy to make out from the passage I have quoted, what his son's guilt really consisted in. Defoe had assigned certain property to the son to be held in trust for his wife and daughters. The son had not secured them in the enjoyment of this provision, but maintained them, and gave them words and promises, with which they were content, that he would continue to maintain them. It was this that Defoe called making them "beg their bread at his door, and crave as if it were an alms" the provision to which they were legally entitled. Why did Defoe vent his grief at this conduct in such strong language to his son-in-law, at the same time enjoining him to make a prudent use of it? Baker had written to his father-in-law making inquiry about the securities for his wife's portion; Defoe answers with profuse expressions of affection, a touching picture of his old age and feebleness, and the imminent ruin of his family through the possible treachery of the son to whom he has entrusted their means of support, and an adjuration to his son-in-law to stand by them with comfort and counsel when he is gone. The inquiry about the securities he dismisses in a postscript. He will not sell the house, and he does not know who has the policy of assurance.

One thing and one thing only shines clearly out of the obscurity in which Defoe's closing years are wrapt—his earnest desire to make provision for those members of his family who could not provide for themselves. The pursuit from which he was in hiding, was in all probability the pursuit of creditors. We have seen that his income must have been large from the year 1718 or thereabouts, till his utter loss of credit in journalism about the year 1726; but he may have had old debts. It is difficult to explain otherwise why he should have been at such pains, when he became prosperous, to assign property to his children. There is evidence, as early as 1720, of his making over property to his daughter Hannah, and the letter from which I have quoted shows that he did not hold his Newington estate in his own name. In this letter he speaks of a perjured, contemptible enemy as the cause of his misfortunes. Mr. Lee conjectures that this was Mist, that Mist had succeeded in embroiling him with the Government by convincing them of treachery in his secret services, and that this was the hue and cry from which he fled. But it is hardly conceivable that the Government could have listened to charges brought by a man whom they had driven from the country for his seditious practices. It is much more likely that Mist and his supporters had sufficient interest to instigate the revival of old pecuniary claims against Defoe.

It would have been open to suppose that the fears which made the old man a homeless wanderer and fugitive for the last two years of his life, were wholly imaginary, but for the circumstances of his

death. He died of a lethargy on the 26th of April, 1731, at a lodging in Ropemaker's Alley, Moorfields. In September, 1733, as the books in Doctors' Commons show, letters of administration on his goods and chattels were granted to Mary Brooks, widow, a creditrix, after summoning in official form the next of kin to appear. Now, if Defoe had been driven from his home by imaginary fears, and had baffled with the cunning of insane suspicion the efforts of his family to bring him back, there is no apparent reason why they should not have claimed his effects after his death. He could not have died unknown to them, for place and time were recorded in the newspapers. His letter to his son-in-law, expressing the warmest affection for all his family except his son, is sufficient to prevent the horrible notion that he might have been driven forth like Lear by his undutiful children after he had parted his goods among them. If they had been capable of such unnatural conduct, they would not have failed to secure his remaining property. Why, then, were his goods and chattels left to a creditrix? Mr. Lee ingeniously suggests that Mary Brooks was the keeper of the lodging where he died, and that she kept his personal property to pay rent and perhaps funeral expenses. A much simpler explanation, which covers most of the known facts without casting any unwarranted reflections upon Defoe's children, is that when his last illness overtook him he was still keeping out of the way of his creditors, and that everything belonging to him in his own name was legally seized. But there are doubts and difficulties attending any explanation.

Mr. Lee has given satisfactory reasons for believing that Defoe did not, as some of his biographers have supposed, die in actual distress. Ropemaker's Alley in Moorfields was a highly respectable street at the beginning of last century; a lodging there was far from squalid. The probability is that Defoe subsisted on his pension from the Government during his last two years of wandering; and suffering though he was from the infirmities of age, yet wandering was less of a hardship than it would have been to other men, to one who had been a wanderer for the greater part of his life. At the best it was a painful and dreary ending for so vigorous a life, and unless we pitilessly regard it as a retribution for his moral defects, it is some comfort to think that the old man's infirmities and anxieties were not aggravated by the pressure of hopeless and helpless poverty. Nor do I think that he was as distressed as he represented to his son-in-law by apprehensions of ruin to his family after his death, and suspicions of the honesty of his son's intentions. There is a half insane tone about his letter to Mr. Baker, but a certain method may be discerned in his incoherencies. My own reading of it is that it was a clever evasion of his son-in-law's attempts to make sure of his share of the inheritance. We have seen how shifty Defoe was in the original bargaining about his daughter's portion, and we know from his novels what his views were about fortune-hunters, and with what delight he dwelt upon the arts of outwitting them. He probably considered

that his youngest daughter was sufficiently provided for by her marriage, and he had set his heart upon making provision for her unmarried sisters. The letter seems to me to be evidence, not so much of fears for their future welfare, as of a resolution to leave them as much as he could. Two little circumstances seem to show that, in spite of his professions of affection, there was a coolness between Defoe and his son-in-law. He wrote only the prospectus and the first article for Baker's paper, the *Universal Spectator*, and when he died, Baker contented himself with a simple intimation of the fact.

If my reading of this letter is right, it might stand as a type of the most strongly marked characteristic in Defoe's political writings. It was a masterly and utterly unscrupulous piece of diplomacy for the attainment of a just and benevolent end. This may appear strange after what I have said about Defoe's want of honesty, yet one cannot help coming to this conclusion in looking back at his political career before his character underwent its final degradation. He was a great, a truly great liar, perhaps the greatest liar that ever lived. His dishonesty went too deep to be called superficial, yet, if we go deeper still in his rich and strongly mixed nature, we come upon stubborn foundations of conscience. Among contemporary comments on the occasion of his death, there was one which gave perfect expression to his political position. "His knowledge of men, especially those in high life (with whom he was formerly very conversant) had weakened his attachment to any political party; but, in the main, he was in the interest of civil and religious liberty, in behalf of which he appeared on several remarkable occasions." The men of the time with whom Defoe was brought into contact, were not good examples to him. The standard of political morality was probably never so low in England as during his lifetime. Places were dependent on the favour of the Sovereign, and the Sovereign's own seat on the throne was insecure; there was no party cohesion to keep politicians consistent, and every man fought for his own hand. Defoe had been behind the scenes, witnessed many curious changes of service, and heard many authentic tales of jealousy, intrigue, and treachery. He had seen Jacobites take office under William, join zealously in the scramble for his favours, and enter into negotiations with the emissaries of James either upon some fancied slight, or from no other motive than a desire to be safe, if by any chance the sceptre should again change hands. Under Anne he had seen Whig turn Tory and Tory turn Whig, and had seen statesmen of the highest rank hold out one hand to Hanover and another to St. Germains. The most single-minded man he had met had been King William himself, and of his memory he always spoke with the most affectionate honour. Shifty as Defoe was, and admirably as he used his genius for circumstantial invention to cover his designs, there was no other statesman of his generation who remained more true to the principles of the Revolution, and to the cause of civil and religious freedom. No other public man saw more clearly

what was for the good of the country, or pursued it more steadily. Even when he was the active servant of Harley, and turned round upon men who regarded him as their own, the part which he played was to pave the way for his patron's accession to office under the House of Hanover. Defoe did as much as any one man, partly by secret intrigue, partly through the public press, perhaps as much as any ten men outside those in the immediate direction of affairs, to accomplish the two great objects which William bequeathed to English statesmanship—the union of England and Scotland, and the succession to the United Kingdom of a Protestant dynasty. Apart from the field of high politics, his powerful advocacy was enlisted in favour of almost every practicable scheme of social improvement that came to the front in his time. Defoe cannot be held up as an exemplar of moral conduct, yet if he is judged by the measures that he laboured for and not by the means that he employed, few Englishmen have lived more deserving than he of their country's gratitude. He may have been self-seeking and vain-glorious, but in his political life self-seeking and vain-glory were elevated by their alliance with higher and wider aims. Defoe was a wonderful mixture of knave and patriot. Sometimes pure knave seems to be uppermost, sometimes pure patriot; but the mixture is so complex, and the energy of the man so restless, that it almost passes human skill to unravel the two elements. The author of *Robinson Crusoe*, is entitled to the benefit of every doubt.

BURKE

BY

JOHN MORLEY

NOTE.

THE present writer published a study on Burke some twelve years ago. It was almost entirely critical, and in no sense a narrative. The volume now submitted to the readers of this Series is biographical rather than critical, and not more than about a score of pages have been reproduced in it from the earlier book. Three pages (pp. 211-213) have been inserted from an article on Burke contributed by me to the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica;* and I have to thank Messrs. Black for the great courtesy with which they have allowed me to transcribe the passage here. These borrowings from my former self, the reader will perhaps be willing to excuse, on the old Greek principle, that a man may once say a thing as he would have it said, δὶς δὲ οὐκ ἐνδέχεται—he cannot say it twice.

J. M.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

EARLY LIFE AND FIRST WRITINGS 9

CHAPTER II.

IN IRELAND—PARLIAMENT—BEACONSFIELD 20

CHAPTER III.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE 31

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROCKINGHAM PARTY—PARIS—ELECTION AT BRISTOL—THE AMERICAN WAR 44

CHAPTER V.

ECONOMICAL REFORM—BURKE IN OFFICE—FALL OF HIS PARTY . 59

CHAPTER VI.

BURKE AND HIS FRIENDS 70

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW MINISTRY — WARREN HASTINGS — BURKE'S PUBLIC POSITION 80

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION 93

CHAPTER IX.

BURKE AND HIS PARTY—PROGRESS OF THE REVOLUTION—IRELAND —LAST YEARS 113

CHAPTER X.

BURKE'S LITERARY CHARACTER 130

BURKE.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE, AND FIRST WRITINGS.

It will soon be a hundred and twenty years since Burke first took his seat in the House of Commons, and it is eighty-five years since his voice ceased to be heard there. Since his death, as during his life, opinion as to the place to which he is entitled among the eminent men of his country has touched every extreme. Tories have extolled him as the saviour of Europe. Whigs have detested him as the destroyer of his party. One undiscriminating panegyrist calls him the most profound and comprehensive of political philosophers that has yet existed in the world. Another and more distinguished writer insists that he is a resplendent and far-seeing rhetorician, rather than a deep and subtle thinker. A third tells us that his works cannot be too much our study, if we mean either to understand or to maintain against its various enemies, open and concealed, designing and mistaken, the singular constitution of this fortunate island. A fourth, on the contrary, declares that it would be hard to find a single leading principle or prevailing sentiment in one half of these works, to which something extremely adverse cannot be found in the other half. A fifth calls him one of the greatest men, and, Bacon alone excepted, the greatest thinker, who ever devoted himself to the practice of English politics. Yet, oddly enough, the author of the fifth verdict will have it that this great man and great thinker was actually out of his mind, when he composed the pieces for which he has been most widely admired and revered.

A sufficient interval has now passed to allow all the sediment of party fanaticism to fall to the bottom. The circumstances of the world have since Burke's time undergone variation enough to enable us to judge, from many points of view, how far he was the splendid pamphleteer of a faction, and how far he was a contributor to the universal stock of enduring wisdom. Opinion is slowly, but without reaction, settling down to the verdict that Burke is one of the abiding names in our history, not because he either saved Eu-

rope or destroyed the Whig party; but because he added to the permanent considerations of wise political thought, and to the maxims of wise practice in great affairs, and because he imprints himself upon us with a magnificence and elevation of expression, that places him among the highest masters of literature, in one of its highest and most commanding senses. Those who have acquired a love for abstract politics amid the almost mathematical closeness and precision of Hobbes, the philosophic calm of Locke or Mill, or even the majestic and solemn fervour of Milton, are revolted by the unrestrained passion and the decorated style of Burke. His passion appears hopelessly fatal to success in the pursuit of Truth, who does not usually reveal herself to followers thus inflamed. His ornate style appears fatal to the cautious and precise method of statement, suitable to matter which is not known at all unless it is known distinctly. Yet the natural ardour which impelled Burke to clothe his judgments in glowing and exaggerated phrases, is one secret of his power over us, because it kindles in those who are capable of that generous infection a respondent interest and sympathy. But more than this, the reader is speedily conscious of the precedence in Burke of the facts of morality and conduct, of the many interwoven affinities of human affection and historical relation, over the unreal necessities of mere abstract logic. Burke's mind was full of the matter of great truths, copiously enriched from the fountains of generous and many-coloured feeling. He thought about life as a whole, with all its infirmities and all its pomps. With none of the mental exclusiveness of the moralist by profession, he fills every page with solemn reference and meaning; with none of the mechanical bustle of the common politician, he is everywhere conscious of the mastery of laws, institutions, and government over the character and happiness of men. Besides thus diffusing a strong light over the awful tides of human circumstance, Burke has the sacred gift of inspiring men to use a grave diligence in caring for high things, and in making their lives at once rich and austere. Such a part in a literature is indeed high. We feel no emotion of revolt when Mackintosh speaks of Shakespere and Burke in the same breath, as being both of them above mere talent. And we do not dissent when Macaulay, after reading Burke's works over again, exclaims, "How admirable! The greatest man since Milton!"

The precise date of Burke's birth cannot be stated with certainty. All that we can say is that it took place either in 1728 or 1729, and it is possible that we may set it down in one or the other year, as we choose to reckon by the old or the new style. The best opinion is that he was born at Dublin on the 12th of January, 1729 (N.S.). His father was a solicitor in good practice, and is believed to have been descended from some Bourkes of county Limerick, who held a respectable local position in the time of the civil wars. Burke's mother belonged to the Nagle family, which had a strong connexion in the county of Cork; they had been among the last

adherents of James II., and they remained firm Catholics. Mrs. Burke remained true to the church of her ancestors, and her only daughter was brought up in the same faith. Edmund Burke and his two brothers, Garret and Richard, were bred in the religion of their father; but Burke never, in after-times, lost a large and generous way of thinking about the more ancient creed of his mother and his uncles.

In 1741 he was sent to school at Ballitore, a village some thirty miles away from Dublin, where Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker from Yorkshire, had established himself fifteen years before, and had earned a wide reputation as a successful teacher and a good man. According to Burke, he richly deserved this high character. It was to Abraham Shackleton that he always professed to owe whatever gain had come to him from education. If I am anything, he said many years afterwards, it is the education I had there that has made me so. His master's skill as a teacher did not impress him more than the example which was every day set before him of uprightness and simplicity of heart. Thirty years later, when Burke had the news of Shackleton's death (1771), "I had a true honour and affection," he wrote, "for that excellent man. I feel something like a satisfaction in the midst of my concern, that I was fortunate enough to have him once under my roof before his departure." No man has ever had a deeper or more tender reverence than Burke for homely goodness, simple purity, and all the pieties of life; it may well be that this natural predisposition of all characters at once so genial and so serious as his, was finally stamped in him by his first schoolmaster. It is true that he was only two years at Ballitore, but two years at that plastic time often build up habits in the mind that all the rest of a life is unable to pull down.

In 1743 Burke became a student of Trinity College, Dublin, and he remained there until 1748, when he took his Bachelor's degree. These five years do not appear to have been spent in strenuous industry in the beaten paths of academic routine. Like so many other men of great gifts, Burke in his youth was desultory and excursive. He roamed at large over the varied heights that tempt our curiosity, as the dawn of intelligence first lights them up one after another with bewitching visions and illusive magic. "All my studies," Burke wrote in 1746, when he was in the midst of them, "have rather proceeded from sallies of passion, than from the preference of sound reason; and, like all other natural appetites, have been very violent for a season, and very soon cooled, and quite absorbed in the succeeding. I have often thought it a humorous consideration to observe and sum up all the madness of this kind I have fallen into this two years past. First, I was greatly taken with natural philosophy; which, while I should have given my mind to logic, employed me incessantly. This I call my *furor mathematicus*. But this worked off as soon as I began to read it in the college, as men by repletion cast off their stomachs all they have eaten. Then I turned back to logic and metaphysics. Here I remained a good while, and with much pleasure, and this

was my *furor logicus*, a disease very common in the days of ignorance, and very uncommon in these enlightened times. Next succeeded the *furor historicus*, which also had its day, but is now no more, being entirely absorbed in the *furor poeticus*."

This is from one of Burke's letters to Richard Shackleton, the son of his schoolmaster, with whom he had formed one of those close friendships that fill the life of generous youth, as ambition fills an energetic manhood. Many tears were shed when the two boys parted at Ballitore, and they kept up their intimacy by a steady correspondence. They discuss the everlasting dispute as to the ultimate fate of those who never heard the saving name of Christ. They send one another copies of verses, and Burke prays for Shackleton's judgment on an invocation of his new poem, to beauteous nymphs who haunt the dusky wood, which hangs recumbent o'er the crystal flood. Burke is warned by Shackleton to endeavour to live according to the rules of the Gospel, and he humbly accepts the good advice, with the deprecatory plea that in a town it is difficult to sit down to think seriously: it is easier, he says, to follow the rules of the Gospel in the country, than at Trinity College, Dublin. In the region of profaner things the two friends canvass the comparative worth of Sallust and of Tully's Epistles. Burke holds for the historian, who has, he thinks, a fine, easy, diversified narrative, mixed with reflection, moral and political, neither very trite nor obvious, nor out of the way and abstract, and this is the true beauty of historical observation.

Some pages of verse describe to Shackleton how his friend passes the day, but the reader will perhaps be content to learn in humbler prose that Burke rose with the dawn, and strode forth into the country through fragrant gardens and the pride of May, until want of breakfast drove him back unwillingly to the town, where amid lectures and books his heart incessantly turned to the river and the fir woods of Ballitore. In the evening he again turned his back on the city, taking his way "where Liffey rolls her dead dogs to the sea," along to the wall on the shore, whence he delighted to see the sun sink into the waters, gilding ocean, ships, and city as it vanished. Alas, it was beneath the dignity of verse to tell us what we should most gladly have known. For,

> "The muse nor can, nor will declare,
> What is my work, and what my studies there."

What serious nourishment Burke was laying in for his understanding, we cannot learn from any other source. He describes himself as spending three hours almost every day in the public library. "The best way in the world," he adds oddly enough, "of killing thought." I have read some history, he says, and among other pieces of history, "I am endeavouring to get a little into the accounts of this, our own poor country"—a pathetic expression, which represents Burke's perpetual mood, as long as he lived, of affectionate pity for his native land. Of the eminent Irishmen

whose names adorn the annals of Trinity College in the eighteenth century, Burke was only contemporary at the University with one, the luckless sizar who in the fulness of time wrote the *Vicar of Wakefield.* There is no evidence that at this time he and Goldsmith were acquainted with one another. Flood had gone to Oxford some time before. The one or two companions whom Burke mentions in his letters are only shadows of names. The mighty Swift died in 1745, but there is nothing of Burke's upon the event. In the same year came the Pretender's invasion, and Burke spoke of those who had taken part in it in the same generous spirit that he always showed to the partisans of lost historic causes.

Of his own family Burke says little, save that in 1746 his mother had a dangerous illness. In all my life, he writes to his friend, I never found so heavy a grief, nor really did I well know what it was before. Burke's father is said to have been a man of angry and irritable temper, and their disagreements were frequent. This unhappy circumstance made the time for parting not unwelcome. In 1747 Burke's name had been entered at the Middle Temple, and after taking his degree, he prepared to go to England to pursue the ordinary course of a lawyer's studies. He arrived in London in the early part of 1750.

A period of nine years followed, in which the circumstances of Burke's life are enveloped in nearly complete obscurity. He seems to have kept his terms in the regular way at the Temple, and from the mastery of legal principles and methods which he afterwards showed in some important transactions, we might infer that he did more to qualify himself for practice than merely dine in the hall of his Inn. For law, alike as a profession and an instrument of mental discipline, he had always the profound respect that it so amply deserves, though he saw that it was not without drawbacks of its own. The law, he said, in his fine description of George Grenville, in words that all who think about schemes of education ought to ponder, "is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences; *a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all the other kinds of learning put together;* but it is not apt, except in persons very happily born, to open and to liberalise the mind exactly in the same proportion." * Burke was never called to the bar, and the circumstance that, about the time when he ought to have been looking for his first guinea, he published a couple of books which had as little as possible to do with either law or equity, is a tolerably sure sign that he had followed the same desultory courses at the Temple as he had followed at Trinity College. We have only to tell over again a very old story. The vague attractions of literature prevailed over the duty of taking up a serious profession. His father, who had set his heart on having a son in the rank of a barrister, was first suspicious, then extremely indignant, and at last he withdrew his son's allowance, or else reduced it so low that the

* *American Taxation.*

recipient could not possibly live upon it. This catastrophe took place some time in 1755—a year of note in the history of literature, as the date of the publication of Johnson's Dictionary. It was upon literature, the most seductive, the most deceiving, the most dangerous of professions, that Burke, like so many hundreds of smaller men before and since, now threw himself for a livelihood.

Of the details of the struggle we know very little. Burke was not fond in after-life of talking about his earlier days, not because he had any false shame about the straits and hard shifts of youthful neediness, but because he was endowed with a certain inborn stateliness of nature, which made him unwilling to waste thoughts on the less dignified parts of life. This is no unqualified virtue, and Burke might have escaped some wearisome frets and embarrassments in his existence, if he had been capable of letting the detail of the day lie more heavily upon him. So far as it goes, however, it is a sign of mental health that a man should be able to cast behind him the barren memories of bye-gone squalor. We may be sure that whatever were the external ordeals of his apprenticeship in the slippery craft of the literary adventurer, Burke never failed in keeping for his constant companions generous ambitions and high thoughts. He appears to have frequented the debating clubs in Fleet Street and the Piazza of Covent Garden, and he showed the common taste of his time for the theatre. He was much of a wanderer, partly from the natural desire of restless youth to see the world, and partly because his health was weak. In after-life he was a man of great strength, capable not only of bearing the strain of prolonged application to books and papers in the solitude of his library, but of bearing it at the same time with the distracting combination of active business among men. At the date of which we are speaking, he used to seek a milder air at Bristol, or in Monmouthshire, or Wiltshire. He passed the summer in retired country villages, reading and writing with desultory industry, in company with William Burke, a namesake but perhaps no kinsman. It would be interesting to know the plan and scope of his studies. We are practically reduced to conjecture. In a letter of counsel to his son in after-years, he gave him a weighty piece of advice, which is pretty plainly the key to the reality and fruitfulness of his own knowledge. "*Reading*," he says, "*and much reading is good. But the power of diversifying the matter in your own mind, and of applying it to every occasion that arises, is far better; so don't suppress the* vivida vis." We have no more of Burke's doings than obscure and tantalising glimpses, tantalising, because he was then at the age when character usually either fritters itself away, or grows strong on the inward sustenance of solid and resolute aspirations. Writing from Battersea to his old comrade, Shackleton, in 1757, he begins with an apology for a long silence which seems to have continued from months to years. "I have broken all rules; I have neglected all decorums; everything except that I have never forgot a friend, whose good head and heart have made me esteem and love him. What appearance there may have been of neglect,

arises from my manner of life; chequered with various designs; sometimes in London, sometimes in remote parts of the country; sometimes in France, and shortly, please God, to be in America."

One of the hundred inscrutable rumours that hovered about Burke's name was, that he at one time actually did visit America. This was just as untrue as that he became a convert to the Catholic faith; or that he was the lover of Peg Woffington; or that he contested Adam Smith's chair of moral philosophy at Glasgow along with Hume, and that both Burke and Hume were rejected in favour of some fortunate Mr. James Clow. They are all alike unfounded. But the same letter informs Shackleton of a circumstance more real and more important than any of these, though its details are only doubtfully known. Burke had married—when and where, we cannot tell. Probably the marriage took place in the winter of 1756. His wife was the daughter of Dr. Nugent, an Irish physician once settled at Bath. One story is that Burke consulted him in one of his visits to the west of England, and fell in love with his daughter. Another version makes Burke consult him after Dr. Nugent had removed to London; and tells how the kindly physician, considering that the noise and bustle of chambers over a shop must hinder his patient's recovery, offered him rooms in his own house. However these things may have been, all the evidence shows Burke to have been fortunate in the choice or accident that bestowed upon him his wife. Mrs. Burke, like her father, was, up to the time of her marriage, a Catholic. Good judges belonging to her own sex describe her as gentle, quiet, soft in her manners, and well bred. She had the qualities which best fitted and disposed her to soothe the vehemence and irritability of her companion. Though she afterwards conformed to the religion of her husband, it was no insignificant coincidence that in two of the dearest relations of his life the atmosphere of Catholicism was thus poured round the great preacher of the crusade against the Revolution.

About the time of his marriage, Burke made his first appearance as an author. It was in 1756 that he published *A Vindication of Natural Society*, and the more important essay, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful.* The latter of them had certainly been written a long time before, and there is even a traditional legend that Burke wrote it when he was only nineteen years old. Both of these performances have in different degrees a historic meaning, but neither of them would have survived to our own day unless they had been associated with a name of power. A few words will suffice to do justice to them here. And first as to the *Vindication of Natural Society.* Its alternative title was, *A View of the Miseries and Evils arising to Mankind from every Species of Civil Society, in a Letter to Lord ——, by a late Noble Writer.* Bolingbroke had died in 1751, and in 1754 his philosophical works were posthumously given to the world by David Mallet, Dr. Johnson's beggarly Scotchman, to whom Bolingbroke had left half-a-crown in his will, for firing off a

blunderbuss which he was afraid to fire off himself. The world of letters had been keenly excited about Bolingbroke. His busy and chequered career, his friendship with the great wits of the previous generation, his splendid style, his bold opinions, made him a dazzling figure. This was the late Noble Writer whose opinions Burke intended to ridicule, by reducing them to an absurdity in an exaggeration of Bolingbroke's own manner. As it happened, the public did not readily perceive either the exaggeration in the manner, or the satire in the matter. Excellent judges of style made sure that the writing was really Bolingbroke's, and serious critics of philosophy never doubted that the writer, whoever he was, meant all that he said. We can hardly help agreeing with Godwin, when he says that in Burke's treatise the evils of existing political institutions, which had been described by Locke, are set forth more at large, with incomparable force of reasoning and lustre of eloquence, though the declared intention of the writer was to show that such evils ought to be considered merely trivial. Years afterwards, Boswell asked Johnson whether an imprudent publication by a certain friend of his at an early period of his life, would be likely to hurt him? "No, sir," replied the sage; "not much; it might perhaps be mentioned at an election." It is significant that in 1765, when Burke saw his chance of a seat in Parliament, he thought it worth while to print a second edition of his *Vindication*, with a preface to assure his readers that the design of it was ironical. It has been remarked as a very extraordinary circumstance that an author who had the greatest fame of any man of his day as the master of a superb style, for this was indeed Bolingbroke's position, should have been imitated to such perfection by a mere novice, that accomplished critics like Chesterfield and Warburton should have mistaken the copy for a first-rate original. It is, however, to be remembered that the very boldness and sweeping rapidity of Bolingbroke's prose rendered it more fit for imitation, than if its merits had been those of delicacy or subtlety; and we must remember that the imitator was no pygmy, but himself one of the giants. What is certain is that the study of Bolingbroke which preceded this excellent imitation left a permanent mark, and traces of Bolingbroke were never effaced from the style of Burke.

The point of the *Vindication* is simple enough. It is to show that the same instruments which Bolingbroke had employed in favour of natural against revealed religion, could be employed with equal success in favour of natural as against, what Burke calls, artificial society. "Show me," cries the writer, "an absurdity in religion, and I will undertake to show you a hundred for one in political laws and institutions. . . . If, after all, you should confess all these things yet plead the necessity of political institutions, weak and wicked as they are, I can argue with equal, perhaps superior force, concerning the necessity of artificial religion; and every step you advance in your argument, you add a strength to mine. So that, if we are resolved to submit our reason and our liberty to civil usurpation, we have nothing to do but to conform as quietly as we

can to the vulgar notions which are connected with this, and take up the theology of the vulgar as well as their politics. But if we think this necessity rather imaginary than real, we should renounce their dreams of society, together with their visions of religion, and vindicate ourselves into perfect liberty."

The most interesting fact about this spirited performance is, that it is a satirical literary handling of the great proposition which Burke enforced, with all the thunder and lurid effulgence of his most passionate rhetoric, five-and-thirty years later. This proposition is that the world would fall into ruin, "if the practice of all moral duties, and the foundations of society, rested upon having their reasons made clear and demonstrative to every individual." The satire is intended for an illustration of what with Burke was the cardinal truth for men, namely, that if you encourage every individual to let the imagination loose upon all subjects, without any restraint from a sense of his own weakness, and his subordinate rank in the long scheme of things, then there is nothing of all that the opinion of ages has agreed to regard as excellent and venerable, which would not be exposed to destruction at the hands of rationalistic criticism. This was Burke's most fundamental and unswerving conviction from the first piece that he wrote down to the last, and down to the last hour of his existence.

It is a coincidence worth noticing that only two years before the appearance of the *Vindication*, Rousseau had published the second of the two memorable Discourses in which he insisted with serious eloquence on that which Burke treats as a triumph of irony. He believed, and many thousands of Frenchmen came to a speculative agreement with him, that artificial society had marked a decline in the felicity of man, and there are passages in the Discourse in which he demonstrates this, that are easily interchangeable with passages in the *Vindication*. Who would undertake to tell us from internal evidence whether the following page, with its sombre glow, is an extract from Burke, or an extract from the book which Rousseau begins by the sentence that man is born free, yet is he everywhere in chains ?

There are in Great Britain upwards of a hundred thousand people employed in lead, tin, iron, copper, and coal mines; these unhappy wretches scarce ever see the light of the sun; they are buried in the bowels of the earth; there they work at a severe and dismal task, without the least prospect of being delivered from it; they subsist upon the coarsest and worst sort of fare; they have their health miserably impaired, and their lives cut short, by being perpetually confined in the close vapour of these malignant minerals. A hundred thousand more at least are tortured without remission by the suffocating smoke, intense fires, and constant drudgery, necessary in refining and managing the products of those mines. If any man informed us that two hundred thousand innocent persons were condemned to so intolerable slavery, how should we pity the unhappy sufferers, and how great would be our just indignation against those who inflicted so cruel and ignominious a punishment! . . . But this number, considerable as it is, and the slavery, with all its baseness and horror, which we have at home, is nothing to what the rest of the world affords

of the same nature. Millions daily bathed in the poisonous damps and destructive effluvia of lead, silver, copper, and arsenic, to say nothing of those other employments, those stations of wretchedness and contempt, in which civil society has placed the numerous *enfans perdus* of her army. Would any rational man submit to one of the most tolerable of these drudgeries, for all the artificial enjoyments which policy has made to result from them? . . . Indeed, the blindness of one part of mankind co-operating with the frenzy and villany of the other, has been the real builder of this respectable fabric of political society: and as the blindness of mankind has caused their slavery, in return their state of slavery is made a pretence for continuing them in a state of blindness; for the politician will tell you gravely, that their life of servitude disqualifies the greater part of the race of man for a search of truth, and supplies them with no other than mean and insufficient ideas. This is but too true; and this is one of the reasons for which I blame such institutions.

From the very beginning, therefore, Burke was drawn to the deepest of all the currents in the thought of the eighteenth century. Johnson and Goldsmith continued the traditions of social and polite literature which had been established by the Queen Anne men. Warburton and a whole host of apologists carried on the battle against deism and infidelity. Hume, after furnishing the arsenal of scepticism with a new array of deadlier engines and more abundant ammunition, had betaken himself placidly to the composition of history. What is remarkable in Burke's first performance is his discernment of the important fact, that behind the intellectual disturbances in the sphere of philosophy, and the noiser agitations in the sphere of theology, there silently stalked a force that might shake the whole fabric of civil society itself. In France, as all students of its speculative history are agreed, there came a time in the eighteenth century when theological controversy was turned into political controversy. Innovators left the question about the truth of Christianity, and busied themselves with questions about the ends and means of governments. The appearance of Burke's *Vindication of Natural Society* coincides in time with the beginning of this important transformation. Burke foresaw from the first what, if rationalism were allowed to run an unimpeded course, would be the really great business of the second half of his century.

If in his first book Burke showed how alive he was to the profound movement of the time, in the second he dealt with one of the most serious of its more superficial interests. The essay on the Sublime and Beautiful fell in with a set of topics, on which the curiosity of the better minds of the age, alike in France, England, and Germany, was fully stirred. In England the essay has been ordinarily slighted; it has perhaps been overshadowed by its author's fame in weightier matters. The nearest approach to a full and serious treatment of its main positions is to be found in Dugald Stewart's lectures. The great rhetorical art-critic of our own day refers to it in words of disparagement, and in truth it has none of the flummery of modern criticism. It is a piece of hard thinking,

and it has the distinction of having interested and stimulated Lessing, the author of *Laoköon* (1766), by far the most definitely valuable of all the contributions to æsthetic thought in an age which was not poor in them. Lessing was so struck with the *Inquiry* that he set about a translation of it, and the correspondence between him and Moses Mendelssohn on the questions which Burke had raised, contains the germs of the doctrine as to poetry and painting which *Laoköon* afterwards made so famous. Its influence on Lessing and on Kant was such as to justify the German historian of the literature of the century in bestowing on it the coveted epithet of epoch-making.

The book is full of crudities. We feel the worse side of the eighteenth century when Burke tells us that a thirst for Variety in architecture is sure to leave very little true taste; or that an air of robustness and strength is very prejudicial to beauty; or that sad fuscous colours are indispensable for sublimity. Many of the sections, again, are little more than expanded definitions from the dictionary. Any tiro may now be shocked at such a proposition as that beauty acts by relaxing the solids of the whole system. But at least one signal merit remains to the *Inquiry*. It was a vigorous enlargement of the principle, which Addison had not long before timidly illustrated, that critics of art seek its principles in the wrong place, so long as they limit their search to poems, pictures, engravings, statues, and buildings, instead of first arranging the sentiments and faculties in man to which art makes its appeal. Addison's treatment was slight, and merely literary; Burke dealt boldly with his subject on the base of the most scientific psychology that was then within his reach. To approach it on the psychological side at all, was to make a distinct and remarkable advance in the method of the inquiry which he had taken in hand.

CHAPTER II.

IN IRELAND—PARLIAMENT—BEACONSFIELD.

BURKE was thirty years old before he approached even the threshold of the arena in which he was destined to be so great a figure. He had made a mark in literature, and it was to literature rather than to public affairs that his ambition turned. He had naturally become acquainted with the brother authors who haunted the coffee-houses in Fleet Street; and Burke, along with his father-in-law, Dr. Nugent, was one of the first members of the immortal club where Johnson did conversational battle with all comers. We shall, in a later chapter, have something to say on Burke's friendships with the followers of his first profession, and on the active sympathy with which he helped those who were struggling into authorship. Meanwhile, the fragments that remain of his own attempts in this direction are no considerable contributions. His *Hints for an Essay on the Drama* are jejune and infertile, when compared with the vigorous and original thought of Diderot and Lessing at about the same period. He wrote an Account of the European Settlements in America. His *Abridgment of the History of England* comes down no further than to the reign of John. A much more important undertaking than his history of the past, was his design for a yearly chronicle of the present. The *Annual Register* began to appear in 1759. Dodsley, the bookseller of Pall Mall, provided the sinews of war, and he gave Burke a hundred pounds a year for his survey of the great events which were then passing in the world. The scheme was probably born of the circumstances of the hour, for this was the climax of the Seven Years' War. The clang of arms was heard in every quarter of the globe, and in East and West new lands were being brought under the dominion of Great Britain.

In this exciting crisis of national affairs, Burke began to be acquainted with public men. In 1759 he was introduced, probably by Lord Charlemont, to William Gerard Hamilton, who only survives in our memories by his nickname of Single-speech. As a matter of fact, he made many speeches in Parliament, and some good ones, but none so good as the first, delivered in a debate in 1755, in which Pitt, Fox, Grenville, and Murray all took part, and were all outshone by the new luminary. But the new luminary never shone again with its first brilliance. He sought Burke out

on the strength of the success of the *Vindication of Natural Society*, and he seems to have had a taste for good company. Horace Walpole describes a dinner at his house in the summer of 1761. "There were Garrick," he says, "and a young Mr. Burke, who wrote a book in the style of Lord Bolingbroke, that is much admired. He is a sensible man, but has not worn off his authorism yet, and thinks there is nothing so charming as writers, and to be one. He will know better one of these days." The prophecy came true in time, but it was Burke's passion for authorism that eventually led to a rupture with his first patron. Hamilton was a man of ability, but selfish and unreasonable. Dr. Leland afterwards described him compendiously as a sullen, vain, proud, selfish, canker-hearted, envious reptile.

In 1761 Hamilton went to Ireland as secretary to Lord Halifax, and Burke accompanied him in some indefinite capacity. "The absenteeism of her men of genius," an eminent historian has said, "was a worse wrong to Ireland that the absenteeism of her landlords. If Edmund Burke had remained in the country where Providence had placed him, he might have changed the current of its history." * It is at least to be said that Burke was never so absorbed in other affairs, as to forget the peculiar interests of his native land. We have his own word, and his career does not belie it, that in the elation with which he was filled on being elected a member of Parliament, what was first and uppermost in his thoughts was the hope of being somewhat useful to the place of his birth and education; and to the last he had in it "a dearness of instinct more than he could justify to reason." In fact the affairs of Ireland had a most important part in Burke's life at one or two critical moments, and this is as convenient a place as we are likely to find for describing in a few words what were the issues. The brief space can hardly be grudged in an account of a great political writer, for Ireland has furnished the chief ordeal, test, and standard of English statesmen.

Ireland in the middle of the eighteenth century was to England just what the American colonies would have been, if they had contained, besides the European settlers, more than twice their number of unenslaved negroes. After the suppression of the great rebellion of Tyrconnel by William of Orange, nearly the whole of the land was confiscated, the peasants were made beggars and outlaws, the Penal Laws against the Catholics were enacted and enforced, and the grand reign of Protestant Ascendancy began in all its vileness and completeness. The Protestants and landlords were supreme; the peasants and the Catholics were prostrate in despair. The Revolution brought about in Ireland just the reverse of what it effected in England. Here it delivered the body of the nation from the attempted supremacy of a small sect. There it made a small sect supreme over the body of the nation. "It was, to say the truth," Burke wrote, "not a revolution but a conquest," and the policy of conquest was treated as the just and normal system

* Froude's *Ireland*, ii. 214.

of government. The last conquest of England was in the eleventh century. The last conquest of Ireland was at the very end of the seventeenth.

Sixty years after these events, when Burke revisited Ireland, some important changes had taken place. The English settlers of the beginning of the century had formed an Irish interest. They had become Anglo-Irish, just as the colonists still further west had formed a colonial interest and become Anglo-American. The same conduct on the part of the mother country promoted the growth of these hostile interests in both cases. The commercial policy pursued by England towards America was identical with that pursued towards Ireland. The industry of the Anglo-Irish traders was restricted, their commerce and even their production fettered, their prosperity checked, for the benefit of the merchants of Manchester and Bristol. *Crescit Roma Albæ ruinis.* "The bulk of the people," said Stone, the Primate, "are not regularly either lodged, clothed, or fed; and those things which in England are called necessaries of life, are to us only accidents, and we can, and in many places do, subsist without them." On the other hand, the peasantry had gradually taken heart to resent their spoliation and attempted extirpation, and in 1761 their misery under the exactions of landlords and a church which tried to spread Christianity by the brotherly agency of the tithe-proctor, gave birth to Whiteboyism—terrible spectre, which, under various names and with various modifications, has ridden Ireland down to our own time.

Burke saw the Protestant traders of the dependency the victims of the colonial and commercial system; the Catholic land-owners legally dispossessed by the operation of the penal laws; the Catholic peasantry deeply penetrated with an insurgent and vindictive spirit; and the imperial government standing very much aloof, and leaving the country to the tender mercies of the Undertakers and some Protestant churchmen. The Anglo-Irish were bitterly discontented with the mother country; and the Catholic native Irish were regarded by their Protestant oppressors with exactly that combination of intense contempt and loathing, and intense rage and terror, which their American counterpart would have divided between the Negro and the Red Indian. To the Anglo-Irish the native peasant was as odious as the first, and as terrible as the second. Even at the close of the century Burke could declare that the various descriptions of the people were kept as much apart, as if they were not only separate nations, but separate species. There were thousands, he says, who had never talked to a Roman Catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk to a gardener's workman, or some other labourer of the second or third order, while a little time before this they were so averse to have them near their persons, that they would not employ even those who could never find their way beyond the stables. Chesterfield, a thoroughly impartial and just observer, said in 1764 that the poor people in Ireland were used worse than negroes by their masters and the middlemen. We should never forget that in the transactions with the

English government during the eighteenth century, the people concerned were not the Irish, but the Anglo-Irish, the colonists of 1691. They were an aristocracy, as Adam Smith said of them, not founded in the natural and respectable distinctions of birth and fortune, but in the most odious of all distinctions, those of religious and political prejudices—distinctions which, more than any other, animate both the insolence of the oppressors, and the hatred and indignation of the oppressed.

The directions in which Irish improvement would move, were clear from the middle of the century to men with much less foresight than Burke had. The removal of all commercial restrictions, either by Independence or Union, on the one hand; and the gradual emancipation of the Catholics, on the other; were the two processes to which every consideration of good government manifestly pointed. The first proved a much shorter and simpler process than the second. To the first the only obstacle was the blindness and selfishness of the English merchants. The second had to overcome the virulent opposition of the tyrannical Protestant faction in Ireland, and the disgraceful but deep-rooted antipathies of the English nation. The history of the relation between the mother country and her dependency during Burke's life, may be characterised as a commercial and legislative struggle between the imperial government and the Anglo-Irish interest, in which each side for its own convenience, as the turn served, drew support from the Catholic majority.

A Whiteboy outbreak, attended by the usual circumstances of disorder and violence, took place while Burke was in Ireland. It suited the interests of faction to represent these commotions as the symptoms of a deliberate rebellion. The malcontents were represented as carrying on treasonable correspondence, sometimes with Spain and sometimes with France; they were accused of receiving money and arms from their foreign sympathisers, and of aiming at throwing off the English rule. Burke says that he had means and the desire of informing himself to the bottom upon the matter, and he came strongly to the conclusion that this was not a true view of what had happened. What had happened was due, he thought, to no plot, but to superficial and fortuitous circumstances. He consequently did not shrink from describing it as criminal, that the king's Catholic subjects in Ireland should have been subjected, on no good grounds, to harassing persecution, and that numbers of them should have been ruined in fortune, imprisoned, tried, and capitally executed for a rebellion which was no rebellion at all. The episode is only important as illustrating the strong and manly temper in which Burke, unlike too many of his countrymen with fortunes to make by English favour, uniformly considered the circumstances of his country. It was not until a later time that he had an opportunity of acting conspicuously on her behalf, but whatever influence he came to acquire with his party was unflinchingly used against the cruelties of English prejudice.

Burke appears to have remained in Ireland for two years (1761–3.) In 1763 Hamilton, who had found him an invaluable auxiliary, procured for him, principally with the aid of the Primate Stone, a pension of three hundred pounds a year from the Irish Treasury. In thanking him for his service, Burke proceeded to bargain that the obligation should not bind him to give to his patron the whole of his time. He insisted on being left with a discreet liberty to continue a little work which he had as a rent-charge upon his thoughts. Whatever advantages he had acquired, he says, had been due to literary reputation, and he could only hope for a continuance of such advantages on condition of doing something to keep the same reputation alive. What this literary design was we do not know with certainty. It is believed to have been a history of England, of which, as I have said, a fragment remains. Whatever the work may have been, it was an offence to Hamilton. With an irrational stubbornness that may well astound us when we think of the noble genius that he thus wishes to confine to paltry personal duties, he persisted that Burke should bind himself to his service for life, and to the exclusion of other interests. "To circumscribe my hopes," cried Burke, "to give up even the possibility of liberty, to annihilate myself for ever!" He threw up the pension, which he had held for two years, and declined all further connexion with Hamilton, whom he roundly described as an infamous scoundrel. "Six of the best years of my life he took me from every pursuit of my literary reputation, or of improvement of my fortune. . . . In all this time you may easily conceive how much I felt at seeing myself left behind by almost all of my contemporaries. There never was a season more favourable for any man who chose to enter into the career of public life; and I think I am not guilty of ostentation in supposing my own moral character, and my industry, my friends and connexions, when Mr. Hamilton first sought my acquaintance, were not at all inferior to those of several whose fortune is at this day upon a very different footing from mine."

It was not long before a more important opening offered itself, which speedily brought Burke into the main stream of public life. In the summer of 1765 a change of ministry took place. It was the third since the king's accession five years ago. First, Pitt had been disgraced, and the old Duke of Newcastle dismissed. Then Bute came into power, but Bute quailed before the storm of calumny and hate which his Scotch nationality, and the supposed source of his power over the king, had raised in every town in England. After Lord Bute, George Grenville undertook the Government. Before he had been many months in office, he had sown the seeds of war in the colonies, wearied parliament, and disgusted the king. In June, 1765, Grenville was dismissed. With profound reluctance the king had no other choice than to summon Lord Rockingham, and Lord Rockingham, in a happy moment for himself and his party, was induced to offer Burke a post as his private secretary. A government by country gentlemen is too apt to be a gov-

ernment of ignorance, and Lord Rockingham was without either experience or knowledge. He felt, or friends felt for him, the advantage of having at his side a man who was chiefly known as an author in the service of Dodsley, and as having conducted the *Annual Register* with great ability, but who even then was widely spoken of as nothing less than an encyclopædia of political knowledge.

It is commonly believed that Burke was commended to Lord Rockingham by William Fitzherbert. Fitzherbert was President of the Board of Trade in the new government, but he is more likely to be remembered as Dr. Johnson's famous example of the truth of the observation, that a man will please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive, because he was the most acceptable man in London, and yet overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents, made no man think worse of himself by being his rival, seemed always to listen, did not oblige you to hear much from him, and did not oppose what you said. Besides Fitzherbert's influence, we have it on Burke's own authority that his promotion was partly due to that mysterious person, William Burke, who was at the same time appointed an under-secretary of state. There must have been unpleasant rumours afloat as to the Burke connexion, and we shall presently consider what they were worth. Meanwhile, it is enough to say that the old Duke of Newcastle hurried to the new premier, and told him the appointment would never do: that the new secretary was not only an Irish adventurer, which was true, but that he was an Irish papist, which was not true; that he was a Jesuit, that he was a spy from Saint Omer's, and that his real name was O'Bourke. Lord Rockingham behaved like a man of sense and honour, sent for Burke, and repeated to him what he had heard. Burke warmly denounced the truthlessness of the Duke's tattle: he insisted that the reports which his chief had heard would probably, even unknown to himself, create in his mind such suspicions as would stand in the way of a thorough confidence. No earthly consideration, he said, should induce him to continue in relations with a man whose trust in him was not entire; and he pressed his resignation. To this Lord Rockingham would not consent, and from that time until his death, seventeen years afterwards, the relations between them were those of loyal and honourable service on the one hand, and generous and appreciative friendship on the other. Six-and-twenty years afterwards (1791) Burke remembered the month in which he had first become connected with a man whose memory, he said, will ever be precious to Englishmen of all parties, as long as the ideas of honour and virtue, public and private, are understood and cherished in this nation.

The Rockingham ministry remained in office for a year and twenty days (1765–6). About the middle of this term (Dec. 26, 1765), Burke was returned to Parliament for the borough of Wendover, by the influence of Lord Verney, who owned it, and who also returned William Burke for another borough. Lord Verney

was an Irish peer, with large property in Buckinghamshire; he now represented that county in Parliament. It was William Burke's influence with Lord Verney that procured for his namesake the seat at Wendover. Burke made his first speech in the House of Commons a few days after the opening of the session of 1766 (Jan. 27), and was honoured by a compliment from Pitt, still the Great Commoner. A week later he spoke again on the same momentous theme, the complaints of the American colonists, and success was so marked that good judges predicted, in the stiff phraseology of the time, that he would soon add the palm of the orator to the laurel of the writer and the philosopher. The friendly Dr. Johnson wrote to Langton, that Burke had gained more reputation than any man at his first appearance had ever gained before. The session was a great triumph to the new member, but it brought neither strength nor popularity to the administration. At the end of it, the king dismissed them, and the Chatham government was formed; that strange combination which has been made famous by Burke's description of it, as a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed, such a piece of diversified mosaic, such a tesselated pavement without cement, that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand upon. There was no obvious reason why Burke should not have joined the new ministry. The change was at first one of persons, rather than of principles or of measures. To put himself, as Burke afterwards said, out of the way of the negotiations which were then being carried on very eagerly and through many channels with the Earl of Chatham, he went to Ireland very soon after the change of ministry. He was free from party engagements, and more than this, he was free at the express desire of his friends; for on the very day of his return, the Marquis of Rockingham wished him to accept office under the new system. Burke "believes he might have had such a situation, but he cheerfully took his fate with his party." In a short time he rendered his party the first of a long series of splendid literary services by writing his *Observations on the Present State of the Nation* (1769). It was a reply to a pamphlet by George Grenville, in which the disappointed minister accused his successors of ruining the country. Burke, in answering the charge, showed a grasp of commercial and fiscal details at least equal to that of Grenville himself, then considered the first man of his time in dealing with the national trade and resources. To this easy mastery of the special facts of the discussion, Burke added the far rarer art of lighting them up by broad principles, and placing himself and his readers at the highest and most effective point of view for commanding their general bearings.

If Burke had been the Irish adventurer that his enemies described, he might well have seized with impatience the opening to office that the recent exhibition of his powers in the House of Commons had now made accessible to him. There was not a man in Great Britain to whom the emoluments of office would have been more useful. It is one of the standing mysteries in literary biog-

raphy, how Burke could think of entering Parliament without any means that anybody can now trace of earning a fitting livelihood. Yet at this time Burke, whom we saw not long ago writing for the booksellers, had become affluent enough to pay a yearly allowance to Barry, the painter, in order to enable him to study the pictures in the great European galleries, and to make a prolonged residence at Rome. A little later he took a step which makes the riddle still more difficult, and which has given abundant employment to wits who are *maximi in minimis*, and think that every question which they can ask, yet to which history has thought it worth while to leave no answer, is somehow a triumph of their own learning and dialectic.

In 1769 Burke purchased a house and lands known as Gregories, in the parishes of Penn and Beaconsfield, in the county of Bucks. It has often been asked, and naturally enough, how a man who, hardly more than a few months before, was still contented to earn an extra hundred pounds a year by writing for Dodsley, should now have launched out as the buyer of a fine house and estate, which cost upwards of twenty-two thousand pounds, which could not be kept up on less than two thousand five hundred a year, and of which the returns did not amount to one-fifth of that sum. Whence did he procure the money, and what is perhaps more difficult to answer, how came he first to entertain the idea of a design so ill-proportioned to anything that we can now discern in his means and prospects? The common answer from Burke's enemies, and even from some neutral inquirers, gives to every lover of this great man's high character an unpleasant shock. It is alleged that he had plunged into furious gambling in East India stock. The charge was current at the time, and it was speedily revived when Burke's abandonment of his party, after the French Revolution, exposed him to a thousand attacks of reckless and uncontrolled virulence. It has been stirred by one or two pertinacious critics nearer our own time, and none of the biographers have dealt with the perplexities of the matter as they ought to have done. Nobody, indeed, has ever pretended to find one jot or tittle of direct evidence that Burke himself took a part in the gambling in India or other stocks. There is evidence that he was a holder of the stock, and no more. But what is undeniable is that Richard Burke, his brother, William Burke, his intimate if not his kinsman, and Lord Verney, his political patron, were all three at this time engaged together in immense transactions in East India stock; that in 1769 the stock fell violently; that they were unable to pay their differences; and that in the very year in which Edmund Burke bought Gregories, they were utterly ruined, two of them beyond retrieval. Again it is clear that, after this, Richard Burke was engaged in land-jobbing in the West Indies; that his claims were disputed by the Government as questionable and dishonest; and that he lost his case. Edmund Burke was said, in the gossip of the day, to be deeply interested in land at Saint Vincent's. But there is no evidence. What cannot be denied is that an unpleasant taint of speculation

and financial adventureship hung at one time about the whole connexion, and that the adventures invariably came to an unlucky end.

Whether Edmund Burke and William Burke were relations or not, and if so, in what degree they were relations, neither of them ever knew; they believed that their fathers sometimes called one another cousins, and that was all that they had to say on the subject. But they were as intimate as brothers, and when William Burke went to mend his broken fortunes in India, Edmund Burke commended him to Philip Francis—then fighting his deadly duel of five years with Warren Hastings at Calcutta—as one whom he had tenderly loved, highly valued, and continually lived with in an union not to be expressed, quite since their boyish years. "Looking back to the course of my life," he wrote in 1771, "I remember no one considerable benefit in the whole of it which I did not, mediately or immediately, derive from William Burke." There is nothing intrinsically incredible, therefore, considering this intimacy and the community of purse and home which subsisted among the three Burkes, in the theory that when Edmund Burke bought his property in Buckinghamshire, he looked for help from the speculations of Richard and William. However this may have been, from them no help came. Many years afterwards (1783), Lord Verney filed a bill in Chancery claiming from Edmund Burke a sum of 6000*l.*, which he alleged that he had lent at the instigation of William Burke to assist in completing the purchase of Beaconsfield. Burke's sworn answer denied all knowledge of the transaction, and the plaintiff did not get the relief for which he had prayed.

In a letter to Shackleton (May 1, 1768) Burke gave the following account of what he had done:—"I have made a push," he says, "with all I could collect of my own, and the aid of my friends, to cast a little root in this country. I have purchased a house, with an estate of about six hundred acres of land, in Buckinghamshire, twenty-four miles from London. It is a place exceedingly pleasant; and I propose, God willing, to become a farmer in good earnest. You who are classical will not be displeased to know that it was formerly the seat of Waller, the poet, whose house, or part of it, makes at present the farm-house within an hundred yards of me." The details of the actual purchase of Beaconsfield have been made tolerably clear. The price was twenty-two thousand pounds, more or less. Fourteen thousand were left on mortgage, which remained outstanding until the sale of the property by Mrs. Burke in 1812. Garret Burke, the elder brother, had shortly before the purchase made Edmund his residuary legatee, and this bequest is rather conjecturally estimated at two thousand pounds. The balance of six thousand was advanced by Lord Rockingham on Burke's bond.

The purchase after all was the smallest part of the matter, and it still remains a puzzle not only how Burke was able to maintain so handsome an establishment, but how he could ever suppose it likely that he would be able to maintain it. He counted, no doubt, on making some sort of income by farming, but then he might well

have known that an absorbed politician would hardly be able, as he called it, to turn farmer in good earnest. For a short time he received a salary of seven hundred pounds a year as agent for New York. We may perhaps take for granted that he made as much more out of his acres. He received something from Dodsley for his work on the *Annual Register* down to 1788. But when all these resources have been counted up, we cannot but see the gulf of a great yearly deficit. The unhappy truth is that from the middle of 1769, when we find him applying to Garrick for the loan of a thousand pounds, down to 1794, when the king gave him a pension, Burke was never free from the harassing strain of debts and want of money. It has been stated with good show of authority, that his obligations to Lord Rockingham amounted to not less than thirty thousand pounds. When that nobleman died (1782), with a generosity which is not the less honourable to him for having been so richly earned by the faithful friend who was the object of it, he left instructions to his executors that all Burke's bonds should be destroyed.

We may indeed wish from the bottom of our hearts that all this had been otherwise. But those who press it as a reproach against Burke's memory may be justly reminded that when Pitt died, after drawing the pay of a minister for twenty years, he left debts to the amount of forty thousand pounds. Burke, as I have said elsewhere, had none of the vices of profusion, but he had that quality which Aristotle places high among the virtues—the noble mean of Magnificence, standing midway between the two extremes of vulgar ostentation and narrow pettiness. At least, every creditor was paid in good time, and nobody suffered but himself. Those who think these disagreeable matters of supreme importance, and allow such things to stand between them and Burke's greatness, are like the people—slightly to alter a figure from a philosopher of old—who, when they went to Olympia, could only perceive that they were scorched by the sun, and pressed by the crowd, and deprived of comfortable means of bathing, and wetted by the rain, and that life was full of disagreeable and troublesome things, and so they almost forgot the great colossus of ivory and gold, Phidias's statue of Zeus, which they had come to see, and which stood in all its glory and power before their perturbed and foolish vision.

There have been few men in history with whom personal objects counted for so little as they counted with Burke. He really did what so many public men only feign to do. He forgot that he had any interests of his own to be promoted, apart from the interests of the party with which he acted, and from those of the whole nation, for which he held himself a trustee. What William Burke said of him in 1766 was true throughout his life—"Ned is full of real business, intent upon doing solid good to his country, as much as if he was to receive twenty per cent. from the Empire." Such men as the shrewd and impudent Rigby atoned for a plebeian origin by the arts of dependence and a judicious servility, and drew more of the public money from the pay office in half-a-dozen quarter-days

than Burke received in all his life. It was not by such arts that Burke rose. When we remember all the untold bitterness of the struggle in which he was engaged, from the time when the old Duke of Newcastle tried to make the Marquis of Rockingham dismiss his new private secretary as an Irish Jesuit in disguise (1765), down to the time when the Duke of Bedford, himself battening "in grants to the house of Russell, so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility," assailed the government for giving Burke a moderate pension, we may almost imagine that if Johnson had imitated the famous Tenth Satire a little later, he would have been tempted to apply the poet's cynical criticism of the career heroic to the greater Cicero of his own day. "I was not," Burke said, in a passage of lofty dignity, "like his Grace of Bedford, swaddled and rocked and dandled into a legislator; *Nitor in adversum* is the motto for a man like me. I possessed not one of the qualities, nor cultivated one of the arts, that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts, by imposing on the understandings of the people. At every step of my progress in life, for in every step was I traversed and opposed, and at every turnpike I met I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country, by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws, and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home: otherwise no rank, no toleration even for me."

CHAPTER III.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL STRUGGLE.

FOREIGN observers of our affairs looked upon the state of England between the accession of George III. and the loss of the American colonies (1760–1776), with mixed disgust and satisfaction. Their instinct as absolute rulers was revolted by a spectacle of unbridled faction and raging anarchy; their envy was soothed by the growing weakness of a power which Chatham had so short a time before left at the highest point of grandeur and strength. Frederick the Great spoke with contempt of the insolence of Opposition and the virulence of parties; and vowed that, petty German prince as he was, he would not change places with the King of England. The Emperor Joseph pronounced positively that Great Britain was declining, that Parliament was ruining itself, and that the colonies threatened a catastrophe. Catherine of Russia thought that nothing would restore its ancient vigour to the realm, short of the bracing and heroic remedy of a war. Even at home, such shrewd and experienced onlookers as Horace Walpole suspected that the state of the country was more serious than it had been since the Great Rebellion, and declared it to be approaching by fast strides to some sharp crisis. Men who remembered their Roman history, fancied that they saw every symptom of confusion that preceded the ruin of the Commonwealth, and began to inquire uneasily what was the temper of the army. Men who remembered the story of the violence and insatiable factiousness of Florence, turned again to Macchiavelli and to Guicciardini, to trace a parallel between the fierce city on the Arno and the fierce city on the Thames. When the King of Sweden, in 1772, carried out a revolution, by abolishing an oligarchic council and assuming the powers of a dictator, with the assent of his people, there were actually serious men in England who thought that the English, after having been guilty of every meanness and corruption, would soon, like the Swedes, own themselves unworthy to be free. The Duke of Richmond, who happened to have a claim to a peerage and an estate in France, excused himself for taking so much pains to establish his claim to them, by gravely asking who knew that a time might not soon come when England would not be worthy living in, and when a retreat to France might be a very happy thing for a free man to have?

The reign had begun by a furious outbreak of hatred between the English and the Scotch. Lord Bute had been driven from office, not merely because he was supposed to owe his power to a scandalous friendship with the King's mother, but because he was accused of crowding the public service with his detested countrymen from the other side of the Tweed. He fell, less from disapproval of his policy than from rude prejudice against his country. The flow of angry emotion had not subsided before the whisper of strife in the American colonies began to trouble the air; and before that had waxed loud, the Middlesex election had blown into a portentous hurricane. This was the first great constitutional case after Burke came into the House of Commons. As, moreover, it became a leading element in the crisis which was the occasion of Burke's first remarkable essay in the literature of politics, it is as well to go over the facts.

The Parliament to which he had first been returned, now approaching the expiry of its legal term, was dissolved in the spring of 1768. Wilkes, then an outlaw in Paris, returned to England, and announced himself as a candidate for the City. When the election was over, his name stood last on the poll. But his ancient fame as the opponent and victim of the court five years before were revived. After his rejection in the City, he found himself strong enough to stand for the county of Middlesex. Here he was returned at the head of the poll after an excited election. Wilkes had been tried in 1764, and found guilty by the King's Bench of republishing Number Forty-five of the *North Briton*, and of printing and publishing the *Essay on Woman*. He had not appeared to receive sentence, and had been outlawed in consequence. After his election for Middlesex, he obtained a reversal of his outlawry on the point of technical form. He then came up for sentence under the original verdict. The court sent him to prison for twenty-two months, and condemned him to pay a fine of a thousand pounds.

Wilkes was in prison when the second session of the new Parliament began. His case came before the House in November, 1768, on his own petition, accusing Lord Mansfield of altering the record at his trial. After many acrimonious debates and examinations of Wilkes and others at the bar of the House, at length, by 219 votes against 136, the famous motion was passed which expelled him from the House. Another election for Middlesex was held, and Wilkes was returned without opposition. The day after the return, the House of Commons resolved, by an immense majority, that, having been expelled, Wilkes was incapable of serving in that Parliament. The following month Wilkes was once more elected. The House once more declared the election void. In April another election took place, and this time the Government put forward Colonel Luttrel, who vacated his seat for Bossiney for the purpose of opposing Wilkes. There was the same result, and for the fourth time Wilkes was at the head of the poll. The House ordered the return to be altered, and after hearing by counsel the freeholders of Middlesex who petitioned against the alteration,

finally confirmed it (May 8, 1769) by a majority of 221 to 152. According to Lord Temple, this was the greatest majority ever known on the last day of a session.

The purport and significance of these arbitrary proceedings need little interpretation. The House, according to the authorities, had a constitutional right to expel Wilkes, though the grounds on which even this is defended would probably be questioned if a similar case were to arise in our own day. But a single branch of the legislature could have no power to pass an incapacitating vote either against Wilkes or anybody else. An Act of Parliament is the least instrument by which such incapacity could be imposed. The House might perhaps expel Wilkes, but it could not either legally, or with regard to the less definite limits of constitutional morality, decide whom the Middlesex freeholders should not elect, and it could not therefore set aside their representative, who was then free from any disabling quality. Lord Camden did not much exaggerate, when he declared in a debate on the subject in the House of Lords, that the judgment passed upon the Middlesex election had given the constitution a more dangerous wound than any which were given during the twelve years' absence of Parliament in the reign of Charles I. The House of Commons was usurping another form of that very dispensing power, for pretending to which the last of the Stuart sovereigns had lost his crown. If the House by a vote could deprive Wilkes of a right to sit, what legal or constitutional impediment would there be in the way, if the majority were at any time disposed to declare all their most formidable opponents in the minority incapable of sitting?

In the same Parliament, there was another and scarcely less remarkable case of Privilege, "that eldest son of Prerogative," as Burke truly called it, "and inheriting all the vices of its parent." Certain printers were accused of breach of privilege for reporting the debates of the House (March, 1771). The messenger of the serjeant-at-arms attempted to take one of them into custody in his own shop in the City. A constable was standing by, designedly, it has been supposed, and Miller, the printer, gave the messenger into his custody for an assault. The case came on before the Lord Mayor, Alderman Wilkes, and Alderman Oliver, the same evening, and the result was that the messenger of the House was committed. The City doctrine was, that if the House of Commons had a serjeant-at-arms, they had a serjeant-at-mace. If the House of Commons could send their citizens to Newgate, they could send its messenger to the Compter. Two other printers were collusively arrested, brought before Wilkes and Oliver, and at once liberated.

The Commons instantly resolved on stern measures. The Lord Mayor and Oliver were taken and dispatched to the Tower, where they lay until the prorogation of Parliament. Wilkes stubbornly refused to pay any attention to repeated summonses to attend at the bar of the House, very properly insisting that he ought to be summoned to attend *in his place* as Member for Middlesex. Besides committing Crosby and Oliver to the Tower, the House

summoned the Lord Mayor's clerk to attend with his books, and then and there forced him to strike out the record of the recognisances into which their manager had entered on being committed at the Mansion House. No Stuart ever did anything more abitrary and illegal. The House deliberately intended to constitute itself, as Burke had said two years before, an arbitrary and despotic assembly. "The distempers of monarchy were the great subjects of apprehension and redress in the last century. In this, the distempers of Parliament."

Burke, in a speech which he delivered in his place in 1771, warned the House of the evils of the course upon which they were entering, and declared those to be their mortal enemies who would persuade them to act as if they were a self-originated magistracy, independent of the people, and unconnected with their opinions and feelings. But these mortal enemies of its very constitution were at this time the majority of the House. It was to no purpose that Burke argued with more than legal closeness that incapacitation could not be a power according to law, inasmuch as it had neither of the two properties of law: it was not *known*, "you yourself not knowing upon what grounds you will vote the incapacity of any man;" and it was not *fixed*, because it was varied according to the occasion, exercised according to discretion, and no man could call for it as a right. A strain of unanswerable reasoning of this kind counted for nothing, in spite of its being unanswerable. Despotic or oligarchic pretensions are proof against the most formidable battery that reason can experience can construct against them. And Wilkes's exclusion endured until this Parliament—the Unreported Parliament, as it was called, and in many respects the very worst that ever assembled at Westminster—was dissolved, and a new one elected (1774), when he was once again returned for Middlesex, and took his seat.

The London multitude had grown zealous for Wilkes, and the town had been harassed by disorder. Of the fierce brutality of the crowd of that age, we may form a vivid idea from the unflinching pencil of Hogarth. Barbarous laws were cruelly administered. The common people were turbulent, because misrule made them miserable. Wilkes had written filthy verses, but the crowd cared no more for this than their betters cared about the vices of Lord Sandwich. They made common cause with one who was accidentally a more conspicuous sufferer. Wilkes was quite right when he vowed that he was no Wilkite. The masses were better than their leader. "Whenever the people have a feeling," Burke once said, "they commonly are in the right: they sometimes mistake the physician." Franklin, who was then in London, was of opinion that if George III. had had a bad character, and John Wilkes a good one, the latter might have turned the former out of the kingdom; for the turbulence that began in street riots at one time threatened to end in revolt. The King himself was attacked with savage invective in papers of which it was said, that no one in the previous

century would have dared to print any like them until Charles was fast locked up in Carisbrooke Castle.

As is usual when the minds of those in power have been infected with an arbitrary temper, the employment of military force to crush civil disturbances became a familiar and favourite idea. The military, said Lord Weymouth, in an elaborate letter which he addressed to the Surrey magistrates, can never be employed to a more constitutional purpose than in the support of the authority and dignity of the magistracy. If the magistrate should be menaced, he is cautioned not to delay a moment in calling for the military, and making use of them effectually. The consequence of this bloody scroll, as Wilkes rightly called it, was that shortly afterwards an affray occurred between the crowd and the troops, in which some twenty people were killed and wounded (May 10, 1768). On the following day, the Secretary of War, Lord Barrington, wrote to the commanding officer, informing him that the King highly approved of the conduct both of officers and men, and wished that his gracious approbation of them should be communicated to them.

Burke brought the matter before the House in a motion for a Committee of Inquiry, supported by one of the most lucid and able of his minor speeches. "If ever the time should come," he concluded, "when this House shall be found prompt to execute and slow to inquire; ready to punish the excesses of the people, and slow to listen to their grievances; ready to grant supplies, and slow to examine the account; ready to invest magistrates with large powers, and slow to inquire into the exercise of them; ready to entertain notions of the military power as incorporated with the constitution—when you learn this in the air of St. James's, then the business is done; then the House of Commons will change that character which it receives from the people only." It is hardly necessary to say that his motion for a committee was lost by the overwhelming majority of two hundred and forty-five against thirty. The general result of the proceedings of the government from the accession of George III. to the beginning of the troubles in the American colonies, was in Burke's own words, that the government was at once dreaded and contemned; that the laws were despoiled of all their respected and salutary terrors; that their inaction was a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence; that our dependencies had slackened in their affections; that we knew neither how to yield nor how to enforce; and that disconnection and confusion, in offices, in parties, in families, in Parliament, in the nation, prevailed beyond the disorders of any former time.

It was in the pamphlet on the *Present Discontents*, published in 1770, that Burke dealt at large with the whole scheme of policy of which all these irregularities were the distempered incidents. The pamphlet was composed as a manifesto of the Rockingham section of the Whig party, to show, as Burke wrote to his chief, how different it was in spirit and composition from "the Bedfords, the Grenvilles, and other knots, who are combined for no public purpose, but only as a means of furthering with joint strength their

private and individual advantage." The pamphlet was submitted in manuscript or proof to the heads of the party. Friendly critics excused some inelegancies which they thought they found in occasional passages, by taking for granted, as was true, that he had admitted insertions from other hands. Here for the first time he exhibited, on a conspicuous scale, the strongest qualities of his understanding. Contemporaries had an opportunity of measuring this strength, by comparison with another performance of similar scope. The letters of Junius had startled the world the year before. Burke was universally suspected of being their author, and the suspicion never wholly died out so long as he lived. There was no real ground for it beyond the two unconnected facts, that the letters were powerful letters, and that Burke had a powerful intellect. Dr. Johnson admitted that he had never had a better reason for believing that Burke was Junius, than that he knew nobody else who had the ability of Junius. But Johnson discharged his mind of the thought, at the instant that Burke voluntarily assured him that he neither wrote the letters of Junius nor knew who had written them. The subjects and aim of those famous pieces were not very different from Burke's tract, but any one who in our time turns from the letters to the tract will wonder how the author of the one could ever have been suspected of writing the other. Junius is never more than a railer, and very often he is third-rate even as a railer. The author of the *Present Discontents* speaks without bitterness even of Lord Bute and the Duke of Grafton; he only refers to persons, when their conduct or their situation illustrates a principle. Instead of reviling, he probes, he reflects, he warns; and as the result of this serious method, pursued by a man in whom close mastery of detail kept exact pace with wide grasp of generalities, we have not the ephemeral diatribe of a faction, but one of the monumental pieces of political literature.

The last great pamphlet in the history of English public affairs had been Swift's tract *On the Conduct of the Allies* (1711), in which the writer did a more substantial service for the Tory party of his day than Burke did for the Whig party of a later date. Swift's pamphlet is close, strenuous, persuasive, and full of telling strokes; but nobody need read it to-day, except the historical student, or a member of the Peace Society, in search of the most convincing exposure of the most insane of English wars.* There is not a sentence in it which does not belong exclusively to the matter in hand: not a line of that general wisdom which is for all time. In the *Present Discontents* the method is just the opposite of this. The details are slurred, and they are not literal. Burke describes with excess of elaboration how the new system is a system of double cabinets; one put forward with nominal powers in Parliament, the other concealed behind the throne, and secretly dictating the policy. The reader feels that this is worked out far too closely to be real. It is a structure of artificial rhetoric. But we lightly

* This was not Burke's judgment on the long war against Louis XIV. See *Regicide Peace. i.*

pass this over, on our way to more solid matter; to the exposition of the principles of a constitution, the right methods of statesmanship, and the defence of party.

It was Bolingbroke, and not Swift, of whom Burke was thinking, when he sat down to the composition of his tract. The *Patriot King* was the fountain of the new doctrines, which Burke trained his party to understand and to resist. If his foe was domestic, it was from a foreign armoury that Burke derived the instruments of resistance. The great fault of political writers is their too close adherence to the forms of the system of state which they happen to be expounding or examining. They stop short at the anatomy of institutions, and do not penetrate to the secret of their functions. An illustrious author in the middle of the eighteenth century introduced his contemporaries to a better way. It is not too much to say that at that epoch the strength of political speculation in this country, from Adam Smith downwards, was drawn from France; and Burke had been led to some of what was most characteristic in his philosophy of society by Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws* (1748), the first great manual of the historic school. We have no space here to work out the relations between Montesquieu's principles and Burke's, but the student of the *Esprit des Lois* will recognise its influence in every one of Burke's masterpieces.

So far as immediate events were concerned, Burke was quick to discern their true interpretation. As has been already said, he attributed to the King and his party a deliberateness of system which probably had no real existence in their minds. The King intended to reassert the old right of choosing his own ministers. George II. had made strenuous but futile endeavours to the same end. His son, the father of George III., Frederick, Prince of Wales, as every reader of Dodington's Diary will remember, was equally bent on throwing off the yoke of the great Whig combinations, and making his own cabinets. George III. was only continuing the purpose of his father and his grandfather; and there is no reason to believe that he went more elaborately to work to obtain his ends.

It is when he leaves the artifices of a cabal, and strikes down below the surface to the working of deep social forces, that we feel the breadth and power of Burke's method. "I am not one of those," he began, "who think that the people are never wrong. They have been so, frequently and outrageously, both in other countries and in this. But I do say that *in all disputes between them and their rulers, the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people.*" Nay, experience perhaps justifies him in going further. When popular discontents are prevalent, something has generally been found amiss in the constitution or the administration. "The people have no interest in disorder. When they go wrong, it is their error, and not their crime." And then he quotes the famous passage from the Memoirs of Sully, which both practical politicians and political students should bind about their necks, and write upon the tables of their hearts: "The revolutions that come to pass in great states are not the result of

chance, nor of popular caprice. . . . As for the populace, it is never from a passion for attack that it rebels, but from impatience of suffering."

What really gives its distinction to the *Present Discontents* is not its plea for indulgence to popular impatience, nor its plea for the superiority of government by aristocracy, but rather the presence in it of the thought of Montesquieu and his school, of the necessity of studying political phenomena in relation, not merely to forms of government and law, but in relation to whole groups of social facts which give to law and government the spirit that makes them workable. Connected with this, is a particularly wide interpretation and a particularly impressive application of the maxims of expediency, because a wide conception of the various interacting elements of a society naturally extends the considerations which a balance of expediencies will include. Hence, in time, there came a strong and lofty ideal of the true statesman, his breadth of vision, his flexibility of temper, his hardly measurable influence. These are the principal thoughts in the *Discontents* to which that tract owes its permanent interest. "Whatever original energy," says Burke, in one place, "may be supposed either in force or regulation, the operation of both is in truth merely instrumental. Nations are governed by the same methods, and on the same principles, by which an individual without authority is often able to govern those who are his equals or superiors; by a knowledge of their temper and by a judicious management of it . . . . The laws reach but a very little way. Constitute Government how you please, infinitely the greater part of it must depend upon the exercise of powers, which are left at large to the prudence and uprightness of ministers of state. Even all the use and potency of the laws dependo upon them. Without them, your Commonwealth is no better than *a scheme upon paper; and not a living, active, effective constitution.*" Thus early in his public career had Burke seized that great antithesis which he so eloquently laboured in the long and ever memorable episode of his war against the French Revolution: the opposition between artificial arrangements in politics, and a living, active, effective organisation, formed by what he calls elsewhere in the present tract, the natural strength of the kingdom, and suitable to the temper and mental habits of the poeple. When he spoke of the natural strength of the kingdom, he gave no narrow or conventional account of it. He included in the elements of that strength, besides the great peers and the leading landed gentlemen, the opulent merchants and manufacturers, and the substantial yeomanry. Contrasted with the trite versions of government as fixed in King, Lords, and Commons, this search for the real organs of power was going to the root of the matter in a spirit at once thoroughly scientific and thoroughly practical. Burke had, by the speculative training to which he had submitted himself in dealing with Bolingbroke, prepared his mind for a complete grasp of the idea of the body politic as a complex growth, a manifold whole, with closely interdependent relations

among its several parts and divisions. It was this conception from which his conservatism sprang. Revolutionary politics have one of their sources in the idea that societies are capable of infinite and immediate modifications, without reference to the deep-rooted conditions that have worked themselves into every part of the social structure.

The same opposition of the positive to the doctrinaire spirit is to be observed in the remarkable vindication of Party, which fills the last dozen pages of the pamphlet, and which is one of the most courageous of all Burke's deliverances. Party combination is exactly one of those contrivances which, as it might seem, a wise man would accept for working purposes, but about which he would take care to say as little as possible. There appears to be something revolting to the intellectual integrity and self-respect of the individual, in the systematic surrender of his personal action, interest, and power, to a political connexion in which his own judgment may never once be allowed to count for anything. It is like the surrender of the right of private judgment to the authority of the Church, but with its nakedness not concealed by a mystic doctrine. Nothing is more easy to demolish by the bare logical reason. But Burke cared nothing about the bare logical reason, until it had been clothed in convenience and custom, in the affections on one side, and experience on the other. Not content with insisting that for some special purpose of the hour, "when bad men combine, the good must associate," he contended boldly for the merits of fidelity to party combination in itself. Although Burke wrote these strong pages as a reply to Bolingbroke, who had denounced party as an evil, they remain as the best general apology that has ever been offered for that principle of public action, against more philosophic attacks than Bolingbroke's. Burke admitted that when he saw a man acting a desultory and disconnected part in public life with detriment to his fortune, he was ready to believe such a man to be in earnest, though not ready to believe him to be right. In any case he lamented to see rare and valuable qualities squandered away without any public utility. He admitted, moreover, on the other hand, that people frequently acquired in party confederacies a narrow, bigoted, and proscriptive spirit. "But where duty renders a critical situation a necessary one, it is our business to keep free from the evils attendant upon it, and not to fly from the situation itself. It is surely no very rational account of a man that he has always acted right; but has taken special care to act in such a manner that his endeavours could not possibly be productive of any consequence. . . . When men are not acquainted with each other's principles, nor experienced in each other's talents, nor at all practised in their mutual habitudes and dispositions by joint efforts of business; no personal confidence, no friendship, no common interest subsisting among them; it is evidently impossible that they can act a public part with uniformity, perseverance, or efficacy."

In terms of eloquent eulogy he praised the sacred reverence with which the Romans used to regard the *necessitudo sortis*, or the

relations that grew up between men who had only held office together by the casual fortune of the lot. He pointed out to emulation the Whig junto who held so close together in the reign of Anne—Sunderland, Godolphin, Somers, and Marlborough—who believed "that no men could act with effect who did not act in concert; that no men could act in concert who did not act with confidence; and that no men could act with confidence who were not bound together by common opinions, common affections, and common interests." In reading these energetic passages we have to remember two things: first, that the writer assumes the direct object of party combination to be generous, great, and liberal causes; and, second, that when the time came, and when he believed that his friends were espousing a wrong and pernicious cause, Burke, like Samson bursting asunder the seven green withes, broke away from the friendships of a life, and deliberately broke his party in pieces.*

When Burke came to discuss the cure for the disorders of 1770, he insisted on contenting himself with what he ought to have known to be obviously inadequate prescriptions. And we cannot help feeling that he never speaks of the constitution of the government of this country without gliding into a fallacy identical with that which he himself described and denounced, as thinking better of the wisdom and power of human legislation than in truth it deserved. He was uniformly consistent in his view of the remedies which the various sections of Opposition proposed against the existing debasement and servility of the Lower House. The Duke of Richmond wanted universal suffrage, equal electoral districts, and annual parliaments. Wilkes proposed to disfranchise the rotten boroughs, to increase the county constituencies, and to give members to rich, populous, trading towns—a general policy which was accepted fifty-six years afterwards. The Constitutional Society desired frequent parliaments, the exclusion of placemen from the House, and the increase of the county representation. Burke uniformly refused to give his countenance to any proposals such as these, which involved a clearly organic change in the constitution. He confessed that he had no sort of reliance upon either a triennial parliament or a place-bill, and with that reasonableness which as a rule was fully as remarkable in him as his eloquence, he showed very good grounds for his want of faith in the popular specifics. In truth, triennial or annual parliaments could have done no good, unless the change had been accompanied by the more important process of amputating, as Chatham called it, the rotten boroughs. Of these the Crown could at that time reckon some seventy as its own property. Besides those which belonged to the Crown, there was also the immense number which belonged to the Peerage. If the King sought to strengthen an administration, the thing needful was not to enlist the services of able and distinguished men, but to conciliate a duke, who brought with him the control of a given

* See on the same subject, *Corresp.* ii. 276–7.

quantity of voting power in the Lower House. All this patrician influence, which may be found at the bottom of most of the intrigues of the period, would not have been touched by curtailing the duration of parliaments.

What then was the remedy, or had Burke no remedy to offer for these grave distempers of Parliament? Only the remedy of the interposition of the body of the people itself. We must beware of interpreting this phrase in the modern democratic sense. In 1766 he had deliberately declared that he thought it would be more conformable to the spirit of the constitution, "by lessening the number, to add to the weight and independency of our voters." "Considering the immense and dangerous charge of elections, the prostitute and daring venality, the corruption of manners, the idleness and profligacy of the lower sort of voters, no prudent man would propose to increase such an evil." * In another place he denies that the people have either enough of speculation in the closet, or of experience in business, to be competent judges, not of the detail of particular measures only, but of *general schemes of policy*.† On Burke's theory, the people, as a rule, were no more concerned to interfere with Parliament, than a man is concerned to interfere with somebody whom he has voluntarily and deliberately made his trustee. But here, he confessed, was a shameful and ruinous breach of trust. The ordinary rule of government was being every day mischievously contemned and daringly set aside. Until the confidence thus outraged should be once more restored, then the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their representatives. That meetings of counties and corporations ought to settle standards for judging more systematically of the behaviour of those whom they had sent to Parliament. Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured. The severest discouragement ought to be given to the pernicious practice of affording a blind and undistinguished support to every administration. "Parliamentary support comes and goes with office, totally regardless of the man or the merit." For instance, Wilkes's annual motion to expunge the votes upon the Middlesex election had been uniformly rejected, as often as it was made while Lord North was in power. Lord North had no sooner given way to the Rockingham Cabinet, than the House of Commons changed its mind, and the resolutions were expunged by a handsome majority of 115 to 47. Administration was omnipotent in the House, because it could be a man's most efficient friend at an election, and could most amply reward his fidelity afterwards. Against this system Burke called on the nation to set a stern face. Root it up, he kept crying; settle the general course in which you desire members to go; insist that they shall not suffer themselves to be diverted from this by the authority of the government of the day; let lists of votes be published, so that you may ascertain for yourselves whether your

* *Observations on late State of the Nation*, Works, i. 105, b.
† *Speech on Duration of Parliaments.*

trustees have been faithful or fraudulent; do all this, and there will be no need to resort to those organic changes, those empirical innovations, which may possibly cure, but are much more likely to destroy.

It is not surprising that so halting a policy should have given deep displeasure to very many, perhaps to most, of those whose only common bond was the loose and negative sentiment of antipathy to the court, the ministry, and the too servile majority of the House of Commons. The Constitutional Society was furious. Lord Chatham wrote to Lord Rockingham that the work in which these doctrines first appeared must do much mischief to the common cause. But Burke's view of the constitution was a part of his belief with which he never paltered, and on which he surrendered his judgment to no man. "Our constitution," in his opinion, "stands on a nice equipoise, with steep precipices and deep waters upon all sides of it. In removing it from a dangerous leaning towards one side, there may be a risk of oversetting it on the other." * This image was ever before his mind. It occurs again in the last sentence of that great protest against all change and movement, when he describes himself as one who, when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise.† When we think of the odious misgovernment in England which the constitution permitted, between the time when Burke wrote and the passing of Lord Sidmouth's Six Acts fifty years later, we may be inclined to class such a constitution among the most inadequate and mischievous political arrangements that any free country has ever had to endure. Yet it was this which Burke declared that he looked upon with filial reverence. "Never will I cut it in pieces, and put it into the kettle of any magician, in order to boil it with the puddle of their compounds into youth and vigour; on the contrary, I will drive away such pretenders; I will nurse its venerable age, and with lenient arts extend a parent's breath."

He was filled with the spirit, and he borrowed the arguments, which have always marked the champion of faith and authority against the impious assault of reason or innovation. The constitution was sacred to him as the voice of the Church and the oracles of her saints are sacred to the fathful. Study it, he cried, until you know how to admire it, and if you cannot know and admire, rather believe that you are dull, than that the rest of the world has been imposed upon. We ought to understand it according to our measure, and to venerate where we are not able presently to comprehend. Well has Burke been called the Bossuet of politics.

Although, however, Burke's unflinching reverence for the constitution, and his reluctance to lay a finger upon it, may now seem clearly excessive, as it did to Chatham and his son, who were great men in the right, or to Beckford and Sawbridge, who were very

* *Present Discontents.* † *Reflection on the French Revolution.*

little men in the right, we can only be just to him by comparing his ideas with those which were dominant throughout an evil reign. While he opposed more frequent parliaments, he still upheld the doctrine that "to govern according to the sense, and agreeable to the interests, of the people is a great and glorious object of government." While he declared himself against the addition of a hundred knights of the shire, he in the very same breath protested that, though the people might be deceived in their choice of an object, he "could scarcely conceive any choice they could make, to be so very mischievous as the existence of any human force capable of resisting it." * To us this may seem very mild and commonplace doctrine, but it was not commonplace in an age when Anglican divines — men like Archbishop Markham, Dr. Nowell, or Dr. Porteous—had revived the base precepts of passive obedience and non-resistance, and when such a man as Lord Mansfield encouraged them. And these were the kind of foundations which Burke had been laying, while Fox was yet a Tory, while Sheridan was writing farces, and while Grey was a schoolboy.

It is, however, almost demonstrably certain that the vindication of the supremacy of popular interests over all other considerations would have been bootless toil, and that the great constitutional struggle from 1760 to 1783 would have ended otherwise than it did, but for the failure of the war against the insurgent colonies, and the final establishment of American Independence. It was this portentous transaction which finally routed the arbitrary and despotic pretensions of the House of Commons over the people, and which put an end to the hopes entertained by the sovereign of making his personal will supreme in the Chambers. Fox might well talk of an early Loyalist victory in the war, as the terrible news from Long Island. The struggle which began unsuccessfully at Brentford in Middlesex, was continued at Boston in Massachusetts. The scene had changed, but the conflicting principles were the same. The war of Independence was virtually a second English civil war. The ruin of the American cause would have been also the ruin of the constitutional cause in England; and a patriotic Englishman may revere the memory of Patrick Henry and George Washington not less justly than the patriotic American. Burke's attitude in this great contest is that part of his history about the majestic and noble wisdom of which there can be least dispute.

* *To the Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Meeting*, 1780.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROCKINGHAM PARTY—PARIS—ELECTION AT BRISTOL—THE AMERICAN WAR.

THE war with the American colonies was preceded by an interval of stupor. The violent ferment which had been stirred in the nation by the affairs of Wilkes and the Middlesex election was followed, as Burke said, by as remarkable a deadness and vapidity. In 1770 the distracted ministry of the Duke of Grafton came to an end, and was succeeded by that of Lord North. The King had at last triumphed. He had secured an administration of which the fundamental principle was that the sovereign was to be the virtual head of it, and the real director of its counsels. Lord North's government lasted for twelve years, and its career is for ever associated with one of the most momentous chapters in the history of the English nation and of free institutions.

Through this long and eventful period, Burke's was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. He had become important enough for the ministry to think it worth while to take pains to discredit him. They busily encouraged the report that he was Junius, or a close ally to Junius. This was one of the minor vexations of Burke's middle life. Even his friends continued to torment him for incessant disclaimers. Burke's lofty pride made him slow to deal positively with what he scorned as a malicious and unworthy imputation. To such a friend as Johnson he did not, as we have seen, disdain to volunteer a denial, but Charles Townshend was forced to write more than one importunate letter before he could extract from Burke the definite sentence (Nov. 24, 1771): "I now give you my word and honour that I am not the author of Junius, and that I know not the author of that paper, and I do authorise you to say so." Nor was this the only kind of annoyance to which he was subjected. His rising fame kindled the candour of the friends of his youth. With proverbial good-nature, they admonished him that he did not bear instruction; that he showed such arrogance as in a man of his condition was intolerable; that he snapped furiously at his parliamentary foes, like a wolf who had broken into the fold; that his speeches were useless declamations; and that he disgraced the House by the scurrilities of the bear-garden. These sharp chastenings of friendship Burke

endured with the perfect self-command, not of the cold and indifferent egotist, but of one who had trained himself not to expect too much from men. He possessed the true solace for all private chagrins in the activity and the fervour of his public interests.

In 1772 the affairs of the East India Company, and its relations with the Government, had fallen into disorder. The Opposition, though powerless in the Houses of Parliament, were often able to thwart the views of the ministry in the imperial board-room in Leadenhall Street. The Duke of Richmond was as zealous and as active in his opposition to Lord North in the business of the East Indies as he was in the business of the country at Westminster. A proposal was made to Burke to go out to India at the head of a commission of three supervisors, with authority to examine the concerns of every department, and full powers of control over the company's servants. Though this offer was pressed by the directors, Burke, after anxious consideration, declined it. What his reasons were, there is no evidence; we can only guess that he thought less of his personal interests than of those of the country and of his party. Without him the Rockingham connexion would undoubtedly have fallen to ruin, and with it the most upright, consistent, and disinterested body of men then in public life. "You say," the Duke of Richmond wrote to him (Nov. 15, 1772), "the party is an object of too much importance to go to pieces. Indeed, Burke, you have more merit than any man in keeping us together." It was the character of the party, almost as much as their principles, that secured Burke's zeal and attachment; their decorum, their constancy, their aversion to all cabals for private objects, their indifference to office, except as an instrument of power and a means of carrying out the policy of their convictions. They might easily have had office, if they would have come in upon the King's terms. A year after his fall from power, Lord Rockingham was summoned to the royal closet, and pressed to resume his post. But office at any price was not in their thoughts. They knew the penalties of their system, and they clung to it undeterred. Their patriotism was deliberate and considered. Chalcedon was called the city of the blind, because its founders wilfully neglected the more glorious site of Byzantium which lay under their eyes. "We have built our Chalcedon," said Burke, "with the chosen part of the universe full in our prospect." They had the faults to which an aristocratic party in opposition is naturally liable. Burke used to reproach them with being somewhat languid, scrupulous, and unsystematic. He could not make the Duke of Richmond put off a large party at Goodwood for the sake of an important division in the House of Lords; and he did not always agree with Lord John Cavendish as to what constitutes a decent and reasonable quantity of fox-hunting for a political leader in a crisis. But it was part of the steadfastness of his whole life to do his best with such materials as he could find; he did not lose patience nor abate his effort, because his friends would miss the opportunity of a great political

stroke, rather than they would miss Newmarket Races. He wrote their protests for the House of Lords, composed petitions for county meetings, drafted resolutions, and plied them with information, ideas, admonitions, and exhortations. Never before nor since has our country seen so extraordinary a union of the clever and indefatigable party-manager, with the reflective and philosophic habits of the speculative publicist. It is much easier to make either absolutism or democracy attractive than aristocracy; yet we see how consistent with his deep moral conservatism was Burke's attachment to an aristocratic party, when we read his exhortation to the Duke of Richmond to remember that persons in his high station of life ought to have long views. "You people," he writes to the Duke (November 17, 1772), "of great families and hereditary trusts and fortunes, are not like such as I am, who, whatever we may be, by the rapidity of our growth, and even by the fruit we bear, and flatter ourselves that, while we creep on the ground, we belly into melons that are exquisite for size and flavour, yet still we are but annual plants that perish with our season, and leave no sort of traces behind us. You, if you are what you ought to be, are in my eye the great oaks that shade a country, and perpetuate your benefits from generation to generation. The immediate power of a Duke of Richmond, or a Marquis of Rockingham, is not so much of moment; but if their conduct and example hand down their principles to their successors, then their houses become the public repositories and office of record for the constitution. . . . I do not look upon your time or lives as lost, if in this sliding away from the genuine spirit of the country, certain parties, if possible—if not, the heads of certain families—should make it their business by the whole course of their lives, principally by their example, to mould into the very vital stamina of their descendants, those principles which ought to be transmitted pure and unmixed to posterity."

Perhaps such a passage as this ought to be described less as reflection than as imagination—moral, historic, conservative imagination—in which order, social continuity, and the endless projection of past into present, and of present into future, are clothed with the sanctity of an inner shrine. We may think that a fox-hunting duke and a racing marquis were very poor centres round which to group these high emotions. But Burke had no puny sentimentalism, and none of the mere literary or romantic conservatism of men like Chateaubriand. He lived in the real world, and not in a false dream of some past world that had never been. He saw that the sporting squires of his party were as much the representatives of ancestral force and quality, as in older days were long lines of Claudii and Valerii. His conservative doctrine was a profound instinct, in part political, but in greater part moral. The accidental roughness of the symbol did not touch him, for the symbol was glorified by the sincerity of his faith and the compass of his imagination.

With these ideas strong within him, in 1773 Burke made a jour-

ney to France. It was almost as though the solemn hierophant of some mystic Egyptian temple should have found himself amid the brilliant chatter of a band of reckless, keen-tongued disputants of the garden or the porch at Athens. His only son had just finished a successful school-course at Westminister, and was now entered a student at Christ Church. He was still too young for the university, and Burke thought that a year could not be more profitably spent than in forming his tongue to foreign languages. The boy was placed at Auxerre, in the house of the business agent of the Bishop of Auxerre. From the Bishop he received many kindnesses, to be amply repaid in after-years when the Bishop came in his old age, an exile and a beggar, to England.

While in Paris, Burke did all that he could to instruct himself as to what was going on in French society. If he had not the dazzling reception which had greeted Hume in 1764, at least he had ample opportunities of acquainting himself with the prevailing ideas of the times, in more than one of the social camps into which Paris was then divided. Madame du Deffand tells the Duchess of Choiseul that though he speaks French extremely ill, everybody felt that he would be infinitely agreeable if he could more easily make himself understood. He followed French well enough as a listener, and went every day to the courts to hear the barristers and watch the procedure. Madame du Deffand showed him all possible attention, and her friends eagerly seconded her. She invited him to supper parties where he met the Count de Broglie, the agent of the king's secret diplomacy; Caraccioli, successor of the nimble-witted Galiani as minister from Naples; and other notabilities of the high world. He supped with the Duchess of Luxembourg, and heard a reading of La Harpe's *Barmecides*. It was high treason in this circle to frequent the rival salon of Mademoiselle Lespinasse, but either the law was relaxed in the case of foreigners, or else Burke kept his own counsel. Here were for the moment the headquarters of the party of innovation, and here he saw some of the men who were busily forging the thunderbolts. His eye was on the alert, now as always, for anything that might light up the sovereign problems of human government. A book, by a member of this circle, had appeared six months before, which was still the talk of the town, and against which the government had taken the usual important measures of repression. This was the *Treatise on Tactics*, by a certain M. de Guibert, a colonel of the Corsican legion. The important part of the work was the introduction, in which the writer examined with what was then thought extraordinary hardihood, the social and political causes of the decline of the military art in France. Burke read it with keen interest and energetic approval. He was present at the reading of a tragedy by the same author, and gave some offence to the rival coterie by preferring Guibert's tragedy to La Harpe's. To us, however, of a later day, Guibert is known neither for his tragedy nor his essay on tactics, nor for a memory so rapid that he could open a book, throw one glance like a flash of lightning on to a page,

and then instantly repeat from it half a dozen lines word for word. He lives in literature as the inspirer of that ardent passion of Mademoiselle Lespinasse's letters, so unique in their consuming intensity that, as has been said, they seem to burn the page on which they are written. It was, perhaps, at Mademoiselle Lespinasse's that Burke met Diderot. The eleven volumes of the illustrative plates of the Encyclopædia had been given to the public twelve months before, and its editor was just released from the giant's toil of twenty years. Voltaire was in imperial exile at Ferney. Rousseau was copying music in a garret in the street which is now called after his name, but he had long ago cut himself off from society; and Burke was not likely to take much trouble to find out a man whom he had known in England seven years before, and against whom he had conceived a strong and lasting antipathy, as entertaining no principle either to influence his heart or to guide his understanding save a deranged and eccentric vanity.

It was the fashion for English visitors to go to Versailles. They saw the dauphin and his brothers dine in public, before a crowd of princes of the blood, nobles, abbés, and all the miscellaneous throng of a court. They attended mass in the chapel, where the old King, surrounded by bishops, sat in a pew just above that of Madame du Barri. The royal mistress astonished foreigners by hair without powder and cheeks without rouge, the simplest toilettes, and the most unassuming manners. Vice itself, in Burke's famous words, seemed to lose half its evil by losing all its grossness. And there, too, Burke had that vision to which we owe one of the most gorgeous pages in our literature—Marie Antoinette, the young dauphiness, "decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in, glittering like the morning-star, full of life and splendour and joy." The shadow was rapidly stealing on. The year after Burke's visit, the scene underwent a strange transformation. The King died; the mistress was banished in luxurious exile; and the dauphiness became the ill-starred Queen of France. Burke never forgot the emotions of the scene; they awoke in his imagination sixteen years after, when all was changed, and the awful contrast shook him with a passion that his eloquence has made immortal.

Madame du Deffand wrote to Horace Walpole that Burke had been so well received, that he ought to leave France excellently pleased with the country. But it was not so. His spirit was perturbed by what he had listened to. He came away with small esteem for that busy fermentation of intellect in which his French friends most exulted, and for which they looked forward to the gratitude and admiration of posterity. From the spot on which he stood there issued two mighty streams. It was from the ideas of the Parisian Freethinkers whom Burke so detested, that Jefferson, Franklin, and Henry drew those theories of human society which were so soon to find life in American Independence. It was from the same ideas that later on that revolutionary tide surged forth, in which Burke saw no elements of a blessed fertility, but only a

horrid torrent of red and desolating lava. In 1773 there was a moment of strange repose in Western Europe, the little break of stillness that precedes the hurricane. It was, indeed, the eve of a momentous epoch. Before sixteen years were over, the American Republic had risen like a new constellation into the firmament, and the French monarchy, of such antiquity and fame and high pre-eminence in European history, had been shattered to the dust. We may not agree with Burke's appreciation of the forces that were behind these vast convulsions. But at least he saw, and saw with eyes of passionate alarm, that strong speculative forces were at work, which must violently prove the very bases of the great social superstructure, and might not improbably break them up for ever.

Almost immediately after his return from France, he sounded a shrill note of warning. Some Methodists from Chatham had petitioned Parliament against a bill for the relief of Dissenters from subscription to the Articles. Burke denounced the intolerance of the petitioners. It is not the Dissenters, he cried, whom you have to fear, but the men who, "not contented with endeavouring to turn your eyes from the blaze and effulgence of light, by which life and immortality is so gloriously demonstrated by the Gospel, would even extinguish that faint glimmering of Nature, that only comfort supplied to ignorant man before this great illumination. . . These are the people against whom you ought to aim the shaft of the law; these are the men to whom, arrayed in all the terrors of government, I would say, 'You shall not degrade us into brutes.' . . . The most horrid and cruel blow that can be offered to civil society is through atheism. . . .The infidels are outlaws of the constitution, not of this country, but of the human race. They are never, never to be supported, never to be tolerated. Under the systematic attacks of these people, I see some of the props of good government already begin to fail; I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration. I see myself sinking every day under the attacks of these wretched people."* To this pitch he had been excited by the vehement band of men, who had inscribed on their standard *Ecraser l'Infame.*

The second Parliament in which Burke had a seat was dissolved suddenly and without warning (October, 1774). The attitude of America was threatening, and it was believed the Ministers were anxious to have the elections over before the state of things became worse. The whole kingdom was instantly in a ferment. Couriers, chaises, post-horses hurried in every direction over the island, and it was noted, as a measure of the agitation, that no fewer than sixty messengers passed through a single turnpike on one day. Sensible observers were glad to think that, in consequence of the rapidity of the elections, less wine and money would be wasted than at any election for sixty years past. Burke had a

* *Speech on Relief of Protestant Dissenters*, 1773.

houseful of company at Beaconsfield when the news arrived. Johnson was among them, and as the party was hastily breaking up, the old Tory took his Whig friend kindly by the hand: "Farewell, my dear sir," he said, "and remember that I wish you all the success that ought to be wished to you, and can possibly be wished to you, by an honest man."

The words were of good omen. Burke was now rewarded by the discovery that his labours had earned for him recognition and gratitude beyond the narrow limits of a rather exclusive party. He had before this attracted the attention of the mercantile public. The Company of Merchants trading to Africa voted him their thanks for his share in supporting their establishments. The Committee of Trade at Manchester formally returned him their grateful acknowledgments for the active part that he had taken in the business of the Jamaica free ports. But then Manchester returned no representative to Parliament. In two Parliaments Burke had been elected for Wendover free of expense. Lord Verney's circumstances were now so embarrassed, that he was obliged to part with the four seats at his disposal to men who could pay for them. There had been some talk of proposing Burke for Westminster, and Wilkes, who was then omnipotent, promised him the support of the popular party. But the patriot's memory was treacherous, and he speedily forgot, for reasons of his own, an idea that had originated with himself. Burke's constancy of spirit was momentarily overclouded. "Sometimes when I am alone," he wrote to Lord Rockingham (September 15, 1774), "in spite of all my efforts, I fall into a melancholy which is inexpressible, and to which, if I gave way, I should not continue long under it, but must totally sink. Yet I do assure you that partly, and indeed principally, by the force of natural good spirits, and partly by a strong sense of what I ought to do, I bear up so well that no one who did not know them could easily discover the state of my mind or my circumstances. I have those that are dear to me, for whom I must live as long as God pleases, and in what way he pleases. Whether I ought not totally to abandon this public station for which I am so unfit, and have of course been so unfortunate, I know not." But he was always saved from rash retirement from public business by two reflections. He doubted whether a man has a right to retire after he has once gone a certain length in these things. And he remembered that there are often obscure vexations in the most private life, which as effectually destroy a man's peace as anything that can occur in public contentions.

Lord Rockingham offered his influence on behalf of Burke at Malton, one of the family boroughs in Yorkshire, and thither Burke in no high spirits betook himself. On his way to the north he heard that he had been nominated for Bristol, but the nomination had, for certain electioneering reasons, not been approved by the party. As it happened, Burke was no sooner chosen at Malton than, owing to an unexpected turn of affairs at Bristol, the idea of proposing him for a candidate revived. Messengers were sent

express to his house in London, and, not finding him there, they hastened down to Yorkshire. Burke quickly resolved that the offer was too important to be rejected. Bristol was the capital of the west, and it was still in wealth, population, and mercantile activity the second city of the kingdom. To be invited to stand for so great a constituency, without any request of his own and free of personal expense, was a distinction which no politician could hold lightly. Burke rose from the table where he was dining with some of his supporters, stepped into a post-chaise at six on a Tuesday evening, and travelled without a break until he reached Bristol on the Thursday afternoon, having got over two hundred and seventy miles in forty-four hours. Not only did he execute the journey without a break, but, as he told the people of Bristol, with an exulting commemoration of his own zeal that recalls Cicero, he did not sleep for an instant in the interval. The poll was kept open for a month, and the contest was the most tedious that had ever been known in the city. New freemen were admitted down to the very last day of the election. At the end of it, Burke was second on the poll, and was declared to be duly chosen (November 3, 1774). There was a petition against his return, but the election was confirmed, and he continued to sit for Bristol for six years.

The situation of a candidate is apt to find out a man's weaker places. Burke stood the test. He showed none of the petulant rage of those clamorous politicians whose flight, as he said, is winged in a lower region of the air. As the traveller stands on the noble bridge that now spans the valley of the Avon, he may recall Burke's local comparison of these busy, angry familiars of an election, to the gulls that skim the mud of the river when it is exhausted of its tide. He gave his new friends a more important lesson, when the time came for him to thank them for the honour which they had just conferred upon him. His colleague had opened the subject of the relations between a member of Parliament and his constituents; and had declared that, for his own part, he should regard the instructions of the people of Bristol as decisive and binding. Burke in a weighty passage upheld a manlier doctrine.

"Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinions high respect, their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasure, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

"My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But govern-

ment and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion, in which one set of men deliberate and another decide, and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments? . . . *Authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest convictions of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a foundamental mistake of the whole order and tenour of our Constitution." *

For six years the British electors were content to be represented by a man of this independence. They never, however, really acquiesced in the principle that a member of Parliament owes as much to his own convictions as to the will of his constituents. In 1778 a bill was brought into Parliament, relaxing some of the restrictions imposed upon Ireland by the atrocious fiscal policy of Great Britain. The great mercantile centres raised a furious outcry, and Bristol was as blind and as boisterous as Manchester and Glasgow. Burke not only spoke and voted in favour of the commercial propositions, but urged that the proposed removal of restrictions on Irish trade did not go nearly far enough. There was none of that too familiar casuistry, by which public men argue themselves out of their conscience in a strange syllogism, that they can best serve the country in Parliament; that to keep their seats they must follow their electors; and that therefore, in the long run, they serve the country best by acquiescing in ignorance and prejudice. Anybody can denounce an abuse. It needs valour and integrity to stand forth against a wrong to which our best friends are most ardently committed. It warms our hearts to think of the noble courage with which Burke faced the blind and vile selfishness of his own supporters. He reminded them that England only consented to leave to the Irish, in two or three instances, the use of the natural faculties which God had given them. He asked them whether Ireland was united to Great Britain for no other purpose than that we should counteract the bounty of Providence in her favour; and whether, in proportion as that bounty had been liberal, we were to regard it as an evil to be met with every possible corrective? In our day there is nobody of any school who doubts that Burke's view of our trade policy towards Ireland was accurately, absolutely, and magnificently right. I need not repeat the arguments. They made no mark on the Bristol merchants. Burke boldly told them that he would rather run the risk of displeasing than of injuring them. They implored him to become their advocate. "I should only disgrace myself." he said, "I should lose the only thing which can make such abilities as mine of any use to the world now or hereafter. I mean that authority which is derived from the opinion that a member speaks the language of truth and sincerity, and that he is not ready

* *Speech at the conclusion of the Poll.*

to take up or lay down a great political system for the convenience of the hour; that he is in Parliament to support his opinion of the public good, and does not form his opinion in order to get into Parliament or to continue in it." *

A small instalment of humanity to Ireland was not more distasteful to the electors of Bristol, than a small instalment of toleration to Roman Catholics in England. A measure was passed (1778) repealing certain iniquitous penalties created by an act of William the Third. It is needless to say that this rudimentary concession to justice and sense was supported by Burke. His voters began to believe that those were right who had said that he had been bred at Saint Omer's, was a Papist at heart, and a Jesuit in disguise. When the time came, *summa dies et ineluctabile fatum*, Burke bore with dignity and temper his dismissal from the only independent constituency that he ever represented. Years before he had warned a young man entering public life to regard and wish well to the common people, whom his best instincts and his highest duties lead him to love and to serve, but to put as little trust in them as in princes. Burke somewhere describes an honest public life as carrying on a poor unequal conflict against the passions and prejudices of our day, perhaps with no better weapons than passions and prejudices of our own.

The six years during which Burke sat in Parliament for Bristol saw this conflict carried on under the most desperate circumstances. They were the years of the civil war between the English at home and the English in the American colonies. George III. and Lord North have been made scapegoats for sins which were not exclusively their own. They were only the organs and representatives of all the lurking ignorance and arbitrary humours of the entire community. Burke discloses in many places, that for once the King and Parliament did not act without the sympathies of the mass. In his famous speech at Bristol, in 1780, he was rebuking the intolerance of those who bitterly taunted him for the support of the measure for the relaxation of the Penal Code. "It is but too true," he said in a passage worth remembering, "that the love, and even the very idea, of genuine liberty is extremely rare. It is but too true that there are many whose whole scheme of freedom is made up of pride, perverseness, and insolence. They feel themselves in a state of thraldom; they imagine that their souls are cooped and cabined in, unless they have some man, or some body of men, dependent on their mercy. The desire of having some one below them descends to those who are the very lowest of all; and a Protestant cobbler, debased by his poverty, but exalted by his share of the ruling church, feels a pride in knowing it is by his generosity alone that the peer, whose footman's instep he measures, is able to keep his chaplain from a gaol. This disposition is the true source of the passion which many men, in very humble life, have taken to the American war. *Our* subjects in America: *our* colonies · *our* dependents. This lust of party power is the liberty

* *Two letters to gentlemen in Bristol*, 1778

they hunger and thirst for; and this Siren song of ambition has charmed ears that we would have thought were never organised to that sort of music."

This was the mental attitude of a majority of the nation, and it was fortunate for them and for us that the yeomen and merchants on the other side of the Atlantic had a more just and energetic appreciation of the crisis. The insurgents, while achieving their own freedom, were indirectly engaged in fighting the battle of the people of the mother country as well. Burke had a vehement correspondent who wrote to him (1777) that if the utter ruin of this country were to be the consequence of her persisting in the claim to tax America, then he would be the first to say, *Let her perish!* If England prevails, said Horace Walpole, English and American liberty is at end; if one fell, the other would fall with it. Burke, seeing this, "certainly never could and never did wish," as he says of himself, "the colonists to be subdued by arms. He was fully persuaded that if such should be the event, they must be held in that subdued state by a great body of standing forces, and perhaps of foreign forces. He was strongly of opinion that such armies, first victorious over Englishmen, in a conflict for English constitutional rights and privileges, and afterwards habituated (though in America) to keep an English people in a state of abject subjection, would prove fatal in the end to the liberties of England itself." * The way for this remote peril was being sedulously prepared by a widespread deterioration among popular ideas, and a fatal relaxation of the hold which they had previously gained in the public mind. In order to prove that the Americans had no right to their liberties, we were every day endeavouring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we were obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself. The material strength of the Government, and its moral strength alike, would have been reinforced by the defeat of the colonists, to such an extent as to have seriously delayed or even jeopardised English progress, and therefore that of Europe too. As events actually fell out, the ferocious administration of the law in the last five or six years of the eighteenth century, was the retribution for the lethargy or approval with which the mass of the English community had watched the measures of the government against their fellow-Englishmen in America.

It is not necessary here to follow Burke minutely through the successive stages of parliamentary action in the American war. He always defended the settlement of 1766; the Stamp Act was repealed, and the constitutional supremacy and sovereign authority of the mother country was preserved in a Declaratory Act. When the project of taxing the colonies was revived, and relations with them were becoming strained and dangerous, Burke came forward with a plan for leaving the General Assemblies of the colonies to grant supplies and aids, instead of giving and granting supplies in Parliament, to be raised and paid in the colonies. Needless to say

Appeal from the New to the old Whigs.

that it was rejected, and perhaps it was not feasible. Henceforth Burke could only watch in impotence the blunders of government, and the disasters that befell the national arms. But his protests against the war will last as long as our literature.

Of all Burke's writings none are so fit to secure unqualified and unanimous admiration as the three pieces on this momentous struggle: the Speech on American Taxation (April 19, 1774); the Speech on Conciliation with America (March 22, 1775); and the Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol (1777). Together they hardly exceed the compass of the little volume which the reader now has in his hands. It is no exaggeration to say that they compose the most perfect manual in our literature, or in any literature, for one who approaches the study of public affairs, whether for knowledge or for practice. They are an example without fault of all the qualities which the critic, whether a theorist or an actor, of great political situations should strive by night and by day to possess. If the subject with which they deal were less near than it is to our interests and affections as free citizens, these three performances would still abound in the lessons of an incomparable political method. If their subject were as remote as the quarrel between the Corinthians and Corcyra, or the war between Rome and the Allies, instead of a conflict to which the world owes the opportunity of the most important of political experiments, we should still have everything to learn from the author's treatment: the vigorous grasp of masses of compressed detail, the wide illumination from great principles of human experience, the strong and masculine feeling for the two great political ends of Justice and Freedom, the large and generous interpretation of expediency, the morality, the vision, the noble temper. If ever, in the fulness of time—and surely the fates of men and literature cannot have it otherwise—Burke becomes one of the half-dozen names of established and universal currency in education and in common books, rising above the waywardness of literary caprice or intellectual fashions, as Shakespere and Milton and Bacon rise above it, it will be the mastery, the elevation, the wisdom, of these far-shining discourses in which the world will in an especial degree recognise the combination of sovereign gifts with beneficent uses.

The pamphlet on the *Present Discontents* is partially obscured or muffled to the modern reader by the space which is given to the cabal of the day. The *Reflections on the French Revolution* overabounds in declamation, and—apart from its being passionately on one side, and that perhaps the wrong one—the splendour of the eloquence is out of proportion to the reason and the judgment. In the pieces on the American War, on the contrary, Burke was conscious that he could trust nothing to the sympathy or the prepossessions of his readers, and this put him upon an unwonted persuasiveness. Here it is reason and judgment, not declamation; lucidity, not passion; that produces the effects of eloquence. No choler mars the page; no purple patch distracts our minds from the penetrating force of the argument; no commonplace is dressed

up into a vague sublimity. The cause of freedom is made to wear its own proper robe of equity, self-control, and reasonableness.

Not one, but all those great idols of the political market-place whose worship and service has cost the race so dear, are discovered and shown to be the foolish uncouth stocks and stones that they are. Fox once urged members of parliament to peruse the speech on Conciliation again and again, to study it, to imprint it on their minds, to impress it on their hearts. But Fox only referred to the lesson which he thought to be contained in it, that representation is the sovereign remedy for every evil. This is by far the least important of its lessons. It is great in many ways. It is greatest as a remonstrance and an answer against the thriving sophisms of barbarous national pride, the eternal fallacies of war and conquest; and here it is great, as all the three pieces on the subject are so, because they expose with unanswerable force the deep-lying faults of heart and temper, as well as of understanding, which move nations to haughty and violent courses.

The great argument with those of the war party who pretended to a political defence of their position was the doctrine that the English government was sovereign in the colonies as at home; and in the notion of sovereignty they found inherent the notion of an indefeasible right to impose and exact taxes. Having satisfied themselves of the existence of this sovereignty and of the right which they took to be its natural property, they saw no step between the existence of an abstract right and the propriety of enforcing it. We have seen an instance of a similar mode of political thinking in our own lifetime. During the great cival war between the Northern and Southern States of the American Union, people in England convinced themselves — some after careful examination of documents, others by cursory glances at second-hand authorities—that the South had a right to secede. The current of opinion was precisely similar in the struggle to which the United States owed their separate existence. Now the idea of a right as a mysterious and reverend abstraction, to be worshipped in a state of naked divorce from expediency and convenience, was one that Burke's political judgment found preposterous and unendurable. He hated the arbitrary and despotic savour which clung about the English assumptions over the colonies. And his repulsion was heightened when he found that these assumptions were justified, not by some permanent advantage which their victory would procure for the mother country or for the colonies, or which would repay the cost of gaining such a victory; not by the assertion and demonstration of some positive duty, but by the futile and meaningless doctrine that we had a right to do something or other, if we liked.

The alleged compromise of the national dignity implied in a withdrawal of the just claim of the government, instead of convincing, only exasperated him. "Show the thing you contend for to be reason; show it to be common-sense; show it to be the means of attaining some useful end; and then I am content to allow it

what dignity you please," * The next year he took up the ground still more firmly, and explained it still more impressively. As for the question of the right of taxation, he exclaimed, "It is less than nothing in my consideration. . . . My consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of Government. . . . *The question with me is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy.* It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I *ought* to do. I am not determining a point of law; I am restoring tranquillity, and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them." "I am not here going into the distinctions of rights," he cries, "not attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions. *I hate the very sound of them.* This is the true touchstone of all theories which regard man and the affairs of man: does it suit his nature in general? does it suit his nature as modified by his habits?" He could not bear to think of having legislative or political arrangements shaped or vindicated by a delusive geometrical accuracy of deduction, instead of being entrusted to "the natural operation of things, which, left to themselves, generally fall into their proper order."

Apart from his incessant assertion of the principle that man acts from adequate motives relative to his interests, and not on metaphysical speculations, Burke sows, as he marches along in his stately argument, many a germ of the modern philosophy of civilisation. He was told that America was worth fighting for. "Certainly it is," he answered, "if fighting a people be the best way of gaining them." Every step that has been taken in the direction of progress, not merely in empire, but in education, in punishment, in the treatment of the insane, has shown the deep wisdom, so unfamiliar in that age of ferocious penalties and brutal methods, of this truth—that "the natural effect of fidelity, clemency, kindness in governors, is peace, good-will, order and esteem in the governed." Is there a single instance to the contrary? Then there is that sure key to wise politics: "*Nobody shall persuade me, when a whole people are concerned, that acts of lenity are not means of conciliation.*" And that still more famous sentence, "*I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.*

Good and observant men will feel that no misty benevolence or vague sympathy, but the positive reality of experience, inspired such passages as that where he says, "Never expecting to find perfection in men, and not looking for divine attributes in created beings, in my commerce with my contemporaries I have found much human virtue. The age unquestionably produces daring profligates and insidious hypocrites? What then? Am I not to avail myself of whatever good is to be found in the world, because

* *Speech on American Taxation.*

of the mixture of evil that is in it! . . . Those who raise suspicions of the good, on account of the behaviour of evil men, are of the party of the latter. . . . A conscientious person would rather doubt his own judgment, than condemn his species. He that accuses all mankind of corruption, ought to remember that he is sure to convict only one. In truth, I should much rather admit those whom at any time I have disrelished the most, to be patterns of perfection, than seek a consolation to my own unworthiness in a general communion of depravity with all about me." This is one of those pieces of rational constancy and mental wholeness in Burke, which fill up our admiration for him—one of the manifold illustrations of an invincible fidelity to the natural order and operation of things, even when they seemed most hostile to all that was dear to his own personality.

CHAPTER V.

ECONOMICAL REFORM—BURKE IN OFFICE—FALL OF HIS PARTY.

TOWARDS 1780 it began to be clear that the ministers had brought the country into disaster and humiliation, from which their policy contained no way of escape. In the closing months of the American war, the Opposition pressed ministers with a vigour that never abated. Lord North bore their attacks with perfect good-humour. When Burke, in the course of a great oration, parodied Burgoyne's invitation to the Indians to repair to the King's standard, the wit and satire of it almost suffocated the prime minister, not with shame but with laughter. His heart had long ceased to be in the matter, and everybody knew that he only retained his post in obedience to the urgent importunities of the King, whilst such colleagues as Rigby only clung to their place because the salaries were endeared by long familiarity. The general gloom was accidentally deepened by that hideous outbreak of fanaticism and violence, which is known as the Lord George Gordon Riots (June, 1780). The Whigs, as having favoured the relaxation of the laws against popery, were especially obnoxious to the mob. The government sent a guard of soldiers to protect Burke's house in Charles Street, St. James's; but, after he had removed the more important of his papers, he insisted on the guard being dispatched for the protection of more important places, and he took shelter under the roof of General Burgoyne. His excellent wife, according to a letter of his brother, had "the firmness and sweetness of an angel; but why do I say of an angel?—of a woman." Burke himself courageously walked to and fro amid the raging crowds with firm composure, though the experiment was full of peril. He describes the mob as being made up, as London mobs generally are, rather of the unruly and dissolute than of fanatical malignants, and he vehemently opposed any concessions by Parliament to the spirit of intolerance which had first kindled the blaze. All the letters of the time show that the outrages and alarms of those days and nights, in which the capital seemed to be at the mercy of a furious rabble, made a deeper impression on the minds of contemporaries than they ought to have done. Burke was not likely to be less excited than others by the sight of such insensate disorder; and it is no idle fancy that he had the mobs of 1780 still in his memory, when ten years later he poured out the vials of his wrath on the bloodier

mob which carried the King and Queen of France in wild triumph from Versailles to Paris.

In the previous February (1780) Burke had achieved one of the greatest of all his parliamentary and oratorical successes. Though the matter of this particular enterprise is no longer alive, yet it illustrates his many strong qualities in so remarkable a way that it is right to give some account of it. We have already seen that Burke steadily set his face against parliamentary reform; he habitually declared that the machine was well enough to answer any good purpose, provided the materials were sound. The statesman who resists all projects for the reform of the constitution, and yet eagerly proclaims how deplorably imperfect are the practical results of its working, binds himself to vigorous exertions for the amendment of administration. Burke devoted himself to this duty with a fervid assiduity that has not often been exampled, and has never been surpassed. He went to work with the zeal of a religious enthusiast, intent on purging his church and his faith of the corruptions which lowered it in the eyes of men. There was no part or order of government so obscure, so remote, or so complex, as to escape his acute and persevering observation.

Burke's object, in his schemes for Economical Reform, was less to husband the public resources and relieve the tax-payer—though this aim could not have been absent from his mind, overburdened as England then was with the charges of the American war—than to cut off the channels which supplied the corruption of the House of Commons. The full title of the first project which he presented to the legislature (February, 1780), was A Plan for the Better Security of the Independence of Parliament, and the Economical Reformation of the Civil and other Establishments. It was to the former that he deemed the latter to be the most direct road. The strength of the administration in the House was due to the gifts which the Minister had in his hands to dispense. Men voted with the side which could reward their fidelity. It was the number of sinecure places and unpublished pensions which, along with the controllable influence of peers and nabobs, furnished the Minister with an irresistible lever: the avarice and the degraded public spirit of the recipients supplied the required fulcrum. Burke knew that in sweeping away these factitious places and secret pensions, he would be robbing the Court of its chief implements of corruption, and protecting the representative against his chief motive in selling his country. He conceived that he would thus be promoting a far more infallible means than any scheme of electoral reform could have provided, for reviving the integrity and independence of the House of Commons. In his eyes, the evil resided not in the constituencies, but in their representatives; not in the small number of the one, but in the smaller integrity of the other.

The evil did not stop where it began. It was not merely that the sinister motive, thus engendered in the minds of too lax and facile men, induced them to betray their legislative trust, and bar-

ter their own uprightness and the interests of the State. The acquisition of one of these nefarious bribes meant much more than a sinister vote. It called into existence a champion of every inveterate abuse that weighed on the resources of the country. There is a well-known passage in the speech on Economical Reform, in which the speaker shows what an insurmountable obstacle Lord Talbot had found in his attempt to carry out certain reforms in the royal household, in the fact that the turnspit of the King's kitchen was a member of Parliament. "On that rock his whole adventure split—his whole scheme of economy was dashed to pieces; his department became more expensive than ever; the Civil List debt accumulated." Interference with the expenses of the household meant interference with the perquisites or fees of this legislative turnspit, and the rights of sinecures were too sacred to be touched. In comparison with them, it counted for nothing that the King's tradesmen went unpaid, and became bankrupt; that the judges were unpaid; that "the justice of the kingdom bent and gave way; the foreign ministers remained inactive and unprovided; the system of Europe was dissolved; the chain of our alliances was broken; all the wheels of Government at home and abroad were stopped. *The king's turnspit was a member of Parliament.*"* This office, and numbers of others exactly like it, existed solely because the House of Commons was crowded with venal men. The post of royal scullion meant a vote that could be relied upon under every circumstance and in all emergencies. And each incumbent of such an office felt his honour and interests concerned in the defence of all other offices of the same scandalous description. There was thus maintained a strong standing army of expensive, lax, and corrupting officials.

The royal household was a gigantic nest of costly jobbery and purposeless profusion. It retained all "the cumbrous charge of a Gothic establishment," though all its usage and accommodation had "shrunk into the polished littleness of modern elegance." The outlay was enormous. The expenditure on the court tables only was a thing unfathomable. Waste was the rule in every branch of it. There was an office for the Great Wardrobe, another office of the Robes, a third of the Groom of the Stole. For these three useless offices there were three useless treasurers. They all laid a heavy burden on the tax-payer, in order to supply a bribe to the member of Parliament. The plain remedy was to annihilate the subordinate treasuries. "Take away," was Burke's demand, "the whole establishment of detail in the household: the Treasurer, the Comptroller, the Cofferer of the Household, the Treasurers of the Chamber, the Master of Household, the whole Board of Green Cloth; a vast number of subordinate offices in the department of the Steward of the Household; the whole establish-

* The Civil List at this time comprehended a great number of charges, such as those of which Burke speaks, that had nothing to do with the sovereign personally. They were slowly removed, the judicial and diplomatic charges being transferred on the accession of William VI.

ment of the Great Wardrobe; the Removing Wardrobe; the Jewel Office; the Robes; the Board of Works." The abolition of this confused and costly system would not only diminish expense and promote efficiency; it would do still more excellent service in destroying the roots of parliamentary corruption. "Under other governments a question of expense is only a question of economy, and it is nothing more; with us, in every question of expense, there is always a mixture of constitutional considerations."

Places and pensions, though the worst, were not by any means the only stumbling-block in the way of pure and well-ordered government. The administration of the estates of the Crown—the Principality, the Duchy of Cornwall, the Duchy of Lancaster, the County Palatine of Chester—was an elaborate system of obscure and unprofitable expenditure. Wales had to herself eight judges, while no more than twelve sufficed to perform the whole business of justice in England, a country ten times as large, and a hundred times as opulent. Wales, and each of the duchies, had its own exchequer. Every one of these principalities, said Burke, has the apparatus of a kingdom, for the jurisdiction over a few private estates; it has the formality and charge of the Exchequer of Great Britain, for collecting the rents of a country squire. They were the field, in his expressive phrase, of mock jurisdictions and mimic revenues, of difficult trifles and laborious fooleries. "It was but the other day that that pert factious fellow, the Duke of Lancaster, presumed to fly in the face of his liege lord, our gracious sovereign—presumed to go to law with the King. The object is neither your business nor mine. Which of the parties got the better I really forget. The material point is that the suit cost about 15,000*l.* But as the Duke of Lancaster is but agent of Duke Humphrey, and not worth a groat, our sovereign was obliged to pay the costs of both." The system which involved these costly absurdities, Burke proposed entirely to abolish. In the same spirit he wished to dispose of the Crown lands and the forest lands, which it was for the good of the community, not less than of the Crown itself, to throw into the hands of private owners.

One of the most important of these projected reforms, and one which its author did not flinch from carrying out two years later to his own loss, related to the office of Paymaster. This functionary was accustomed to hold large balances of the public money in his own hands and for his own profit, for long periods, owing to a complex system of accounts which was so rigorous as entirely to defeat its own object. The Paymaster could not, through the multiplicity of forms and the exaction of impossible conditions, get a prompt acquittance. The audit sometimes did not take place for years after the accounts were virtually closed. Meanwhile, the money accumulated in his hands, and its profits were his legitimate perquisite. The first Lord Holland, for example, held the balances of his office from 1765, when he retired, until 1778, when they were audited. During this time he realised, as the interest on the use of these balances, nearly two hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

Burke diverted these enormous gains into the coffers of the state. He fixed the Paymaster's salary at four thousand pounds a year, and was himself the first person who accepted the curtailed income.

Not the most fervid or brilliant of Burke's pieces, yet the Speech on Economical Reform is certainly not the least instructive or impressive of them. It gives a suggestive view of the relations existing at that time between the House of Commons and the Court. It reveals the narrow and unpatriotic spirit of the King and the ministers, who could resist proposals so reasonable in themselves, and so remedial in their effects, at a time when the nation was suffering the heavy and distressing burdens of the most disastrous war that our country has ever carried on. It is especially interesting as an illustration of its author's political capacity. At a moment when committees, and petitions, and great county meetings showed how thoroughly the national anger was roused against the existing system, Burke came to the front of affairs with a scheme, of which the most striking characteristic proved to be that it was profoundly temperate. Bent on the extirpation of the system, he had no ill-will towards the men who had happened to flourish in it. "I never will suffer," he said, "any man or description of men to suffer from errors that naturally have grown out of the abusive constitution of those offices which I propose to regulate. If I cannot reform with equity, I will not reform at all." Exasperated as he was by the fruitlessness of his opposition to a policy which he detested from the bottom of his soul, it would have been little wonderful if he had resorted to every weapon of his unrivalled rhetorical armoury, in order to discredit and overthrow the whole scheme of government. Yet nothing could have been further from his mind than any violent or extreme idea of this sort. Many years afterwards he took credit to himself less for what he did on this occasion, than for what he prevented from being done. People were ready for a new modelling of the two Houses of Parliament, as well as for grave modifications of the Prerogative. Burke resisted this temper unflinchingly. "I had," he says, "a state to preserve, as well as a state to reform. I had a people to gratify, but not to inflame or to mislead." He then recounts without exaggeration the pains and caution with which he sought reform, while steering clear of innovation. He heaved the lead every inch of way he made. It is grievous to think that a man who could assume such an attitude at such a time, who could give this kind of proof of this skill in the great, the difficult, art of governing, only held a fifth-rate office for some time less than a twelvemonth.

The year of the project of Economic Reform (1780) is usually taken as the date when Burke's influence and repute were at their height. He had not been tried in the fire of official responsibility, and his impetuosity was still under a degree of control which not long afterwards was fatally weakened by an over-mastering irritability of constitution. High as his character was now in the ascendant, it was in the same year that Burke suffered the sharp mortifi-

cation of losing his seat at Bristol. His speech before the election is one of the best known of all his performances; and it well deserves to be so, for it is surpassed by none in gravity, elevation, and moral dignity. We can only wonder that a constituency which could suffer itself to be addressed on this high level should have allowed the small selfishness of local interest to weigh against such wisdom and nobility. But Burke soon found in the course of his canvas that he had no chance, and he declined to go to the poll. On the previous day one of his competitors had fallen down dead. "*What shadows we are*," said Burke, "*and what shadows we pursue!*"

In 1782 Lord North's government came to an end, and the King "was pleased," as Lord North quoted with jesting irony from the Gazette, to send for Lord Rockingham, Charles Fox, and Lord Shelburne. Members could hardly believe their own eyes, as they saw Lord North and the members of a government which had been in place for twelve years, now lounging on the opposition benches in their great-coats, frocks, and boots, while Fox and Burke shone in the full dress that was then worn by ministers, and cut unwonted figures with swords, lace, and hair powder. Sheridan was made an under-secretary of state, and to the younger Pitt was offered his choice of various minor posts, which he haughtily refused. Burke, to whom on their own admission the party owed everything, was appointed Paymaster of the Forces, with a salary of four thousand pounds a year. His brother, Richard Burke, was made Secretary of the Treasury. His son, Richard, was named to be his father's deputy at the Pay Office, with a salary of five hundred pounds a year.

This singular exclusion from cabinet office of the most powerful genius of the party has naturally given rise to abundant criticism ever since. It will be convenient to say what there is to be said on this subject, in connection with the events of 1788 (below, p 88), because there happens to exist some useful information about the ministerial crisis of that year, which sheds a clearer light upon the arrangements of six years before. Meanwhile it is enough to say that Burke himself had most reasonably looked to some higher post. There is the distinct note of the humility of mortified pride in a letter written in reply to some one who had applied to him for a place. "You have been misinformed," he says; "I make no part of the ministerial arrangement. Something in the official line may possibly be thought fit for my measure." Burke knew that his position in the country entitled him to something above the official line. In a later year, when he felt himself called upon to defend his pension, he described what his position was in the momentous crisis from 1780 to 1782, and Burke's habitual veraciousness forbids us to treat the description as in any way exaggerated. "By what accident it matters not," he say, "nor upon what desert, but just then, and in the midst of that hunt of obloquy which has ever pursued me with a full cry through life, I had obtained a very full degree of public confidence. . . . Nothing

to prevent disorder was omitted; when it appeared, nothing to subdue it was left uncounselled nor unexecuted, as far as I could prevail. At the time I speak of, and having a momentary lead, so aided and so encouraged, and as a feeble instrument in a mighty hand—I do not say I saved my country—I am sure I did my country important service. There were few indeed that did not at that time acknowledge it—and that time was thirteen years ago. It was but one view, that no man in the kingdom better deserved an honorable provision should be made for him." *

We have seen that Burke had fixed the Paymaster's salary at four thousand pounds, and had destroyed the extravagant perquisites. The other economical reforms which were actually effected fell short by a long way of those which Burke had so industriously devised and so forcibly recommended. In 1782, while Burke declined to spare his own office, the chief of the cabinet conferred upon Barré a pension of over three thousand a year; about ten times the amount, as has been said, which, in Lord Rockingham's own judgment, as expressed in the new Bill, ought henceforth to be granted to any one person whatever. This shortcoming, however, does not detract from Burke's merit. He was not responsible for it. The eloquence, ingenuity, diligence, above all, the sagacity and the justice of this great effort of 1780, are none the less worthy of our admiration and regard because, in 1782, his chiefs, partly perhaps out of a newborn deference for the feelings of their royal master, showed that the possession of office had sensibly cooled the ardent aspirations proper to Opposition.

The events of the twenty months between the resignation of Lord North (1782) and the accession of Pitt to the office of Prime Minister (December, 1783) mark an important crisis in political history, and they mark an important crisis in Burke's career and hopes. Lord Rockingham had just been three months in office when he died (July, 1782). This dissolved the bond that held the two sections of the ministry together, and let loose a flood of rival ambitions and sharp animosities. Lord Shelburne believed himself to have an irresistible claim to the chief post in the administration; among other reasons, because he might have had it before Lord Rockingham three months earlier, if he had so chosen. The King supported him, not from any partiality to his person, but because he dreaded and hated Charles Fox. The character of Shelburne is one of the perplexities of the time. His views on peace and free trade make him one of the precursors of the Manchester School. No minister was so well informed as to the threads of policy in foreign countries. He was the intimate or the patron of men who now stood out as among the first lights of that time—of Morellet, of Priestley, of Bentham. Yet a few months of power seem to have disclosed faults of character which left him without a single political friend, and blighted him with irreparable discredit. Fox, who was now the head of the Rockingham section of the Whigs, had, before the death of the late premier, been on the point of refusing to serve

* *Letter to a Noble Lord.*

any longer with Lord Shelburne, and he now very promptly refused to serve under him. When Parliament met after Rockingham's death, gossips noticed that Fox and Burke continued, long after the Speaker had taken the chair, to walk backwards and forwards in the Court of Requests, engaged in earnest conversation. According to one story, Burke was very reluctant to abandon an office whose emoluments were as convenient to him as to his spendthrift colleague. According to another, and more probable legend, it was Burke who hurried the rupture, and stimulated Fox's jealousy of Shelburne. The Duke of Richmond disapproved of the secession, and remained in the government. Sheridan also disapproved, but he sacrificed his personal conviction to loyalty to Fox.

If Burke was responsible for the break-up of the government, then he was the instigator of a blunder that must be pronounced not only disastrous but culpable. It lowered the legitimate spirit of party to the nameless spirit of faction. The dangers from which the old liberties of the realm had just emerged have been described by no one so forcibly as by Burke himself. No one was so convinced as Burke that the only way of withstanding the arbitrary and corrupting policy of the Court was to form a strong Whig party. No one knew better than he the sovereign importance and the immense difficulty of repairing the ruin of the last twelve years by a good peace. The Rockingham or Foxite section were obviously unable to form an effective party with serious expectation of power, unless they had allies. They might, no doubt, from personal dislike to Lord Shelburne, refuse to work under him; but personal dislike could be no excuse for formally and violently working against him, when his policy was their own, and when its success was recognised by them no less than by him as of urgent moment. Instead of either working with the other section of their party, or of supporting from below the gangway that which was the policy of both sections, they sought to return to power by coalescing with the very man whose criminal subservience to the King's will had brought about the catastrophe that Shelburne was repairing. Burke must share the blame of this famous transaction. He was one of the most furious assailants of the new ministry. He poured out a fresh invective against Lord Shelburne every day. Cynical contemporaries laughed as they saw him in search of more and more humiliating parallels, ransacking all literature from the Bible and the Roman history down to Mother Goose's tales. His passion carried him so far as to breed a reaction in those who listened to him. "I think," wrote Mason from Yorkshire, where Burke had been on a visit to Lord Fitzwilliam in the autumn of 1782, "that Burke's mad obloquy against Lord Shelburne, and these insolent pamphlets in which he must have had a hand, will do more to fix him (Shelburne) in his office than anything else."

This result would have actually followed, for the nation was ill pleased at the immoral alliance between the Foxites and the man whom, if they had been true to their opinions a thousand times

repeated, they ought at that moment to have been impeaching. The Dissenters, who had hitherto been his enthusiastic admirers, but who are rigid above other men in their demand of political consistency, lamented Burke's fall in joining the Coalition, as Priestley told him many years after, as the fall of a friend and a brother. But Shelburne threw away the game. "His falsehoods," says Horace Walpole, "his flatteries, duplicity, insincerity, arrogance, contradictions, neglect of his friends, with all the kindred of all these faults, were the daily topics of contempt and ridicule; and his folly shut his eyes, nor did he perceive that so very rapid a fall must have been owing to his own incapacity." This is the testimony of a hostile witness. It is borne out, however, by a circumstance of striking significance. When the King recovered the reins at the end of 1783, not only did he send for Pitt instead of for Shelburne, but Pitt himself neither invited Shelburne to join him, nor in any way ever consulted him then or afterwards, though he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in Shelburne's own administration.

Whatever the causes may have been, the administration fell in the spring of 1783. It was succeeded by the memorable ministry of the Coalition, in which Fox and Lord North divided the real power under the nominal lead of the Duke of Portland. Members saw Lord North squeezed up on the Treasury bench between two men who had a year before been daily menacing him with the axe and the block: and it was not North whom they blamed, but Burke and Fox. Burke had returned to the Pay Office. His first act there was unfortunate. He restored to their position two clerks who had been suspended for malversation, and against whom proceedings were then pending. When attacked for this in the House, he showed an irritation which would have carried him to gross lengths, if Fox and Sheridan had not by main force pulled him down into his seat by the tails of his coat. The restoration of the clerks was an indefensible error of judgment, and its indiscretion was heightened by the kind of defence which Burke tried to set up. When we wonder at Burke's exclusion from great offices, this case of Powell and Bembridge should not be forgotten.

The decisive event in the history of the Coalition Government was the India Bill. The Reports of the various select committees upon Indian affairs—the most important of them all, the ninth and eleventh, having been drawn up by Burke himself—had shown conclusively that the existing system of government was thoroughly corrupt and thoroughly inadequate. It is ascertained pretty conclusively that the bill for replacing that system was conceived and drawn by Burke, and that to him belongs whatever merit or demerit it might possess. It was Burke who infected Fox with his own ardour, and then, as Moore justly says, the self-kindling power of Fox's eloquence threw such fire into defence of the measure, that he forgot, and his hearers never found out, that his views were not originally and spontaneously his own. The novelty on which the great stress of discussion was laid, was that the bill withdrew power

from the Board of Directors, and vested the government for four years in a commission of seven persons named in the bill, and not removable by the House.

Burke was so convinced of the incurable iniquity of the Company, so persuaded that it was not only full of abuses, but, as he said, one of the most corrupt and destructive tyrannies that probably ever existed in the world, as to be content with nothing short of the absolute deprivation of its power. He avowed himself no lover of names, and that he only contended for good government, from whatever quarter it might come. But the idea of good government coming from the Company he declared to be desperate and untenable. This intense animosity, which, considering his long and close familiarity with the infamies of the rule of the Company's servants, was not unnatural, must be allowed, however, to have blinded him to the grave objections which really existed to his scheme. In the first place, the Bill was indisputably inconsistent with the spirit of his revered Constitution. For the legislature to assume the power of naming the members of an executive body, was an extraordinary and mischievous innovation. Then, to put patronage, which has been estimated by a sober authority at about three hundred thousand pounds a year, into the hands of the House of Commons, was still more mischievous and still less justifiable. Worst of all, from the point of view of the projectors themselves, after a certain time the nomination of the Commissioners would fall to the Crown, and this might in certain contingencies increase to a most dangerous extent the ascendancy of the royal authority. If Burke's measure had been carried, moreover, the patronage would have been transferred to a body much less competent than the Directors to judge of the qualities required in the fulfilment of this or that administrative charge. Indian promotion would have followed parliamentary and party interest. In the hands of the Directors there was at least a partial security, in their professional knowledge, and their personal interest in the success of their government, that places would not be given away on irrelevant considerations. Their system, with all its faults, insured the acquisition of a certain considerable competency in administration, before a servant reached an elevation at which he could do much harm.

Burke defended the bill (December 1, 1783) in one of the speeches which rank only below his greatest, and it contains two or three passages of unsurpassed energy and impressiveness. Everybody knows the fine page about Fox as the descendant of Henry IV. of France, and the happy quotation from Silius Italicus. Every book of British eloquence contains the magnificent description of the young magistrates who undertake the government and the spoliation of India; how, "animated with all the avarice of age and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another, wave after wave; and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and of passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wasting." How they return home

laden with spoil; "their prey is lodged in England; and the cries of India are given to seas and winds, to be blown about, in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean." How in India all the vices operate by which sudden fortune is acquired; while in England are often displayed by the same person the virtues which dispense hereditary wealth so that "here the manufacturer and the husbandman will bless the just and punctual hand that in India has torn the cloth from the loom, or wrested the scanty portion of rice and salt from the peasant of Bengal, or wrung from him the very opium in which he forgot his oppression and his oppressors."

No degree of eloquence, however, could avail to repair faults alike in structure and in tactics. The whole design was a masterpiece of hardihood, miscalculation, and mismanagement. The combination of interests against the bill was instant, and it was indeed formidable. The great army of returned nabobs, of directors, of proprietors of East India stock, rose up in all its immense force. Every member of every corporation that enjoyed privilege by charter felt the attack on the Company as if it had been a blow directed against himself. The general public had no particular passion for purity or good government, and the best portion of the public was disgusted with the Coalition. The King saw his chance. With politic audacity he put so strong a personal pressure on the peers, that they threw out the Bill(December, 1783). It was to no purpose that Fox compared the lords to the Janissaries of a Turkish Sultan, and the King's letter to Temple to the rescript in which Tiberius ordered the upright Sejanus to be destroyed. Ministers were dismissed, the young Pitt was installed in their place, and the Whigs were ruined. As a party, they had a few months of office after Pitt's death, but they were excluded from power for half a century,

CHAPTER VI.

BURKE AND HIS FRIENDS.

THOUGH Burke had, at a critical period of his life, definitely abandoned the career of letters, he never withdrew from close intimacy with the groups who still live for us in the pages of Boswell, as no other literary group in our history lives. Goldsmith's famous lines in *Retaliation* show how they all deplored that he should to party give up what was meant for mankind. They often told one another that Edmund Burke was the man whose genius pointed him out as the triumphant champion of faith and sound philosophy against deism, atheism, and David Hume. They loved to see him, as Goldsmith said, wind into his subject like a serpent. Everybody felt at the Literary Club that he had no superior in knowledge, and in colloquial dialectics only one equal. Garrick was there, and of all the names of the time he is the man whom one would perhaps most willingly have seen, because the gifts which threw not only Englishmen, but Frenchmen like Diderot, and Germans like Lichtenberg, into amazement and ecstasy, are exactly those gifts which literary description can do least to reproduce. Burke was one of his strongest admirers, and there was no more zealous attendant at the closing series of performances in which the great monarch of the stage abdicated his throne. In the last pages that he wrote, Burke refers to his ever dear friend Garrick, dead nearly twenty years before, as the first of actors, because he was the acutest observer of nature that he had ever known.

Among men who pass for being more serious than players, Robertson was often in London society, and he attracted Burke by his largeness and breadth. He sent a copy of his history of America, and Burke thanked him with many stately compliments for having employed philosophy to judge of manners, and from manners having drawn new resources of philosophy. Gibbon was there, but the bystanders felt what was too crudely expressed by Mackintosh, that Gibbon might have been taken from a corner of Burke's mind without ever being missed. Though Burke and Gibbon constantly met, it is not likely that, until the Revolution, there was much intimacy between them, in spite of the respect which each of them might well have had for the vast knowledge of the other. When the *Decline and Fall* was published, Burke read it as everybody else did; but he told Reynolds that he disliked the style, as

very affected, mere frippery and tinsel. Sir Joshua himself was neither a man of letters nor a keen politician; but he was full of literary ideas and interests, and he was among Burke's warmest and most constant friends, following him with an admiration and reverence that even Johnson sometimes thought excessive. The reader of Reynolds's famous Discourses will probably share the wonder of his contemporaries, that a man whose time was so absorbed in the practice of his art should have proved himself so excellent a master in the expression of some of its principles. Burke was commonly credited with a large share in their composition, but the evidence goes no further than that Reynolds used to talk them over with him. The friendship between the pair was full and unalloyed. What Burke admired in the great artist was his sense and his morals, no less than his genius; and to a man of his fervid and excitable temper there was the most attractive of all charms in Sir Joshua's placidity, gentleness, evenness, and the habit, as one of his friends described it, of being the same all the year round. When Reynolds died in 1792, he appointed Burke one of his executors, and left him a legacy of two thousand pounds, besides cancelling a bond of the same amount.

Johnson, however, is the only member of that illustrious company who can profitably be compared with Burke in strength and impressiveness of personality, in a large sensibility at once serious and genial, in brooding care for all the fulness of human life. This striking pair were the two complements of a single noble and solid type, holding tenaciously, in a century of dissolvent speculation, to the best ideas of a society that was slowly passing. They were powerless to hinder the inevitable transformation. One of them did not even dimly foresee it. But both of them help us to understand how manliness and reverence, strength and tenderness, love of truth and pity for man, all flourished under old institutions and old ways of thinking, into which the forces of the time were even then silently breathing a new spirit. The friendship between Burke and Johnson lasted as long as they lived; and if we remember that Johnson was a strong Tory, and declared that the first Whig was the devil, and habitually talked about cursed Whigs, and bottomless Whigs, it is an extraordinary fact that his relations with the greatest Whig writer and politician of his day were marked by a cordiality, respect, and admiration that never varied nor wavered. "Burke," he said in a well-known passage, "is such a man that if you met him for the first time in the street, where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk to you in such a manner that, when you parted, you would say, This is an extraordinary man. He is never what we would call humdrum: never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in haste to leave off." That Burke was as good a listener as he was a talker, Johnson never would allow. "So desirous is he to talk," he said, "that if one is talking at this end of the table, he'll talk to somebody at the other end." Johnson was far too good a critic, and too honest a man, to assent to a remark of

Robertson's, that Burke had wit. "No, sir," said the sage, most truly, "he never succeeds there. 'Tis low, 'tis conceit." Wit apart, he described Burke as the only man whose common conversation corresponded to his general fame in the world; take up whatever topic you might please, he was ready to meet you. When Burke found a seat in Parliament, Johnson said, "Now we who know Burke, know that he will be one of the first men in the country." He did not grudge that Burke should be the first man in the House of Commons, for Burke, he said, was always the first man everywhere. Once when he was ill, somebody mentioned Burke's name. Johnson cried out, "That fellow calls forth all my powers; were I to see Burke now it would kill me."

Burke heartily returned this high appreciation. When some flatterer hinted that Johnson had taken more than his right share of the evening's talk, Burke said, "Nay, it is enough for me to have rung the bell for him." Some one else spoke of a successful imitation of Johnson's style. Burke with vehemence denied the success: the performance, he said, had the pomp, but not the force of the original; the nodosities of the oak, but not its strength; the contortions of the sibyl, but none of the inspiration. When Burke showed the old sage of Bolt Court over his fine house and pleasant gardens at Beaconsfield, *Non invideo equidem*, Johnson said, with placid good-will, *miror magis*. They always parted in the deep and pregnant phrase of a sage of our own day, *except in opinion not disagreeing*. In truth, the explanation of the sympathy between them is not far to seek. We may well believe that Johnson was tacitly alive to the essentially conservative spirit of Burke even in his most Whiggish days. And Burke penetrated the liberality of mind in a Tory, who called out with loud indignation that the Irish were in a most unnatural state, for there the minority prevailed over the majority and the severity of the persecution exercised by the Protestants of Ireland against the Catholics, exceeded that of the ten historic persecutions of the Christian Church.

The parties at Beaconsfield, and the evenings at the Turk's Head in Gerard Street, were contemporary with the famous days at Holbach's country house at Grandval. When we think of the reckless themes that were so recklessly discussed by Holbach, Diderot, and the rest of that indefatigable band, we feel that, as against the French philosophic party, an English Tory like Johnson and an English Whig like Burke would have found their own differences too minute to be worth considering. If the group from the Turk's Head could have been transported for an afternoon to Grandval, perhaps Johnson would have been the less impatient and disgusted of the two. He had the capacity of the more genial sort of casuist for playing with subjects, even moral subjects, with the freedom, versatility, and ease that are proper to literature, Burke, on the contrary, would not have failed to see, as indeed we know that he did not fail to see, that a social pandemonium was being prepared in this intellectual paradise of open questions, where God and a future life, marriage and the family, every dogma of

religion, every prescription of morality, and all those mysteries and pieties of human life which have been sanctified by the reverence of ages, were being busily pulled to pieces, as if they had been toys in the hands of a company of sportive children. Even the *Beggar's Opera* Burke could not endure to hear praised for its wit or its music, because his mind was filled by thought of its misplaced levity, and he only saw the mischief which such a performance tended to do to society. It would be hard to defend his judgment in this particular case, but it serves to show how Burke was never content with the literary point of view, and how ready and vigilant he was for effects more profound than those of formal criticism. It is true that Johnson was sometimes not less austere in condemning a great work of art for its bad morality. The only time when he was really angry with Hannah More was on his finding that she had read *Tom Jones*—that vicious book, he called it; he hardly knew a more corrupt work. Burke's tendency towards severity of moral judgment, however, never impaired the geniality and tenderness of his relations with those whom he loved. Bennet Langton gave Boswell an affecting account of Burke's last interview with Johnson. A few days before the old man's death, Burke and four or five other friends were sitting round his bedside. "Mr. Burke said to him, 'I am afraid, sir, such a number of us may be oppressive to you.' 'No, sir,' said Johnson, 'it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state, indeed, when your company is not a delight to me.' Mr. Burke, in a .tremulous voice, expressive of being very tenderly affected, replied, 'My dear sir, you have always been too good to me.' Immediately afterwards he went away. This was the last circumstance in the acquaintance of these two eminent men."

One of Burke's strongest political intimacies was only less interesting and significant than his friendship with Johnson. William Dowdeswell had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the short Rockingham administration of 1765. He had no brilliant gifts, but he had what was then thought a profound knowledge both of the principles and details of the administration of the national revenue. He was industrious, steadfast, clear-headed, inexorably upright. "Immersed in the greatest affairs," as Burke said in his epitaph, "he never lost the ancient, native, genuine English character of a country gentleman." And this was the character in which Burke now and always saw not only the true political barrier against despotism on the one hand and the rabble on the other, but the best moral type of civic virtue. Those who admire Burke, but cannot share his admiration for the country gentleman, will perhaps justify him by the assumption that he clothed his favourite with ideal qualities which ought, even if they did not, to have belonged to that position.

In his own modest imitation and in his own humble scale. he was a pattern of the activity in public duty, the hospitality towards friends, the assiduous protection of neglected worth, which ought to be among the chief virtues of high station. It would perhaps

be doubly unsafe to take for granted that many of our readers have both turned over the pages of Crabbe's *Borough*, and carried away in their minds from that moderately affecting poem, the description of Eusebius—

> That pious moralist, that reasoning saint!
> Can I of worth like thine, Eusebius, speak?
> The man is willing, but the muse is weak.

Eusebius is intended for Burke, and the portrait is a literary tribute for more substantial services. When Crabbe came up from his native Aldborough, with three pounds and a case of surgical instruments in his trunk, he fondly believed that a great patron would be found to watch over his transformation from an unsuccessful apothecary into a popular poet. He wrote to Lord North and Lord Shelburne, but they did not answer his letters; booksellers returned his copious manuscripts; the three pounds gradually disappeared; the surgical instruments went to the pawnbroker's; and the poet found himself an outcast on the world, without a friend, without employment, and without bread. He owed money for his lodging, and was on the very eve of being sent to prison, when it occurred to him to write to Burke. It was the moment (1781) when the final struggle with Lord North was at its fiercest, and Burke might have been absolved if, in the stress of conflict, he had neglected a begging-letter. As it was, the manliness and simplicity of Crabbe's application touched him. He immediately made an appointment with the young poet, and convinced himself of his worth. He not only relieved Crabbe's immediate distress with a sum of money that, as we know, came from no affluence of his own, but carried him off to Beaconsfield, installed him there as a member of the amily, and took as much pains to find a printer for *The Library* and *The Village*, as if they had been his own poems. In time he persuaded the Bishop of Norwich to admit Crabbe, in spite of his want of a regular qualification, to holy orders. He then commended him to the notice of Lord Chancellor Thurlow. Crabbe found the Tiger less formidable than his terrifying reputation, for Thurlow at their first interview presented him with a hundred-pound note, and afterwards gave him a living. The living was of no great value, it is true; and it was Burke who, with untiring friendship, succeeded in procuring something like a substantial position for him, by induicng the Duke of Rutland to make the young parson his chaplain. Henceforth Crabbe's career was assured, and he never forgot to revere and bless the man to whose generous hand he owed his deliverance.

Another of Burke's clients, of whom we hardly know whether to say that he is more or less known to our age than Crabbe, is Barry, a painter of disputable eminence. The son of a seafarer at Cork, he had been introduced to Burke in Dublin in 1762, was brought over to England by him, introduced to some kind of employment, and finally sent, with funds provided by the Burkes, to

study art on the Continent. It was characteristic of Burke's willingness not only to supply money, but, what is a far rarer form of kindness, to take active trouble, that he should have followed the raw student with long and careful letters of advice upon the proper direction of his studies. For five years Barry was maintained abroad by the Burkes. Most unhappily for himself, he was cursed with an irritable and perverse temper, and he lacked even the elementary arts of conduct. Burke was generous to the end, with that difficult and uncommon kind of generosity which moves independently of gratitude or ingratitude in the receiver.

From his earliest days Burke had been the eager friend of people in distress. While he was still a student at the Temple, or a writer for the booksellers, he picked up a curious creature in the park, in such unpromising circumstances that he could not forbear to take him under his instant protection. This was Joseph Emin, the Arminian, who had come to Europe from India with strange heroic ideas in his head as to the deliverance of his countrymen. Burke instantly urged him to accept the few shillings that he happened to have in his purse, and seems to have found employment for him as a copyist, until fortune brought other openings to the singular adventurer. For foreign visitors Burke had always a singular considerateness. Two Brahmins came to England as agents of Ragonaut Rao, and at first underwent intolerable things rather from the ignorance than the unkindness of our countrymen. Burke no sooner found out what was passing, than he carried them down to Beaconsfield, and as it was summer-time he gave them for their separate use a spacious garden-house, where they were free to prepare their food and perform the rites as their religion prescribed. Nothing was so certain to command his fervid sympathy as strict adherence to the rules and ceremonies of an ancient and sacred ordering.

If he never failed to perform the offices to which we are bound by the common sympathy of men, it is satisfactory to think that Burke in return received a measure of these friendly services. Among those who loved him best was Doctor Brocklesby, the tender physician who watched and soothed the last hours of Johnson. When we remember how Burke's soul was harassed by private cares, chagrined by the untoward course of public events, and mortified by neglect from friends no less than by virulent reproach from foes, it makes us feel very kindly towards Brocklesby, to read what he wrote to Burke in 1788:

My very dear friend,—

My veneration of your public conduct for many years past, and my real affection for your private virtues and transcendent worth, made me yesterday take a liberty with you in a moment's conversation at my house, to make you an instant present of 1000*l.*, which for years past I had by will destined as a testimony of my regard on my decease. This you modestly desired me not to think of; but I told you what I now repeat, that unfavoured as I have lived for a long life, unnoticed professionally by any party of men, and though unknown at court, I am rich enough to spare

to virtue (what others waste in vice) the above sum, and still reserve an annual income greater than I spend. I shall receive at the India House a bill I have discounted for 1000*l.* on the 4th of next month, and then shall be happy that you will accept this proof of my sincere love and esteem, and let me add, *Si res ampla domi similisque affectibus esset*, I should be happy to repeat the like every year."

The mere transcription of the friendly man's good letter has something of the effect of an exercise of religion. And it was only one of a series of kind acts on the part of the same generous giver.

It is always interesting in the case of a great man to know how he affected the women of his acquaintance. Women do not usually judge character either so kindly or so soundly as men do, for they lack that knowledge of the ordeals of practical life, which gives both justice and charity to such verdicts. But they are more susceptible than most men are to devotion and nobility in character. The little group of the blue-stockings of the day regarded the great master of knowledge and eloquence with mixed feelings. They felt for Burke the adoring reverence which women offer, with too indiscriminate a trust, to men of commanding power. In his case it was the moral loftiness of his character that inspired them, as much as the splendour of his ability. Of Sheridan or of Fox they could not bear to hear; of Burke they could not hear enough. Hannah More, and Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, the learned translator of Epictetus, and Fanny Burney, the author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, were all proud of his notice, even while they glowed with anger at his sympathy with American rebels, his unkind words about the King, and his cruel persecution of poor Mr. Hastings. It was at Mrs. Vesey's evening parties, given on the Tuesdays on which the Club dined at the Turk's Head, that he often had long chats with Hannah More. She had to forget what she called his political malefactions, before she could allow herself to admire his high spirits and good-humour. This was after the events of the Coalition, and her Memoirs, like the change in the mind of the Dissenters towards Burke, show what a fall that act of faction was believed to mark in his character. When he was rejected for Bristol, she moralised on the catastrophe by the quaint reflection that Providence has wisely contrived to render all its dispensations equal, by making those talents which set one man so much above another of no esteem in the opinion of those who are without them.

Miss Burney has described her flutter of spirits when she first found herself in company with Burke (1782). It was at Sir Joshua's house on the top of Richmond Hill, and she tells, with her usual effusion, how she was impressed by Burke's noble figure and commanding air, his penetrating and sonorous voice, his eloquent and copious language, the infinite variety and rapidity of his discourse. Burke had something to say on every subject, from bits of personal gossip, up to the sweet and melting landscape that lay in all its beauty before their windows on the terrace. He was playful,

serious, fantastic, wise. When they next met, the great man completed his conquest by expressing his admiration of *Evelina.* Gibbon assured her that he had read the whole five volumes in a day; but Burke declared the feat was impossible, for he had himself read it through without interruption, and it had cost him three days. He showed his regard for the authoress in a more substantial way than by compliments and criticism. His last act, before going out of office, in 1783, was to procure for Dr. Burney the appointment of organist at the chapel of Chelsea.

We have spoken of the dislike of these excellent women for Sheridan and Fox. In Sheridan's case Burke did not much disagree with them. Their characters were as unlike and as antipathetic as those of two men could be; and to antipathy of temperament was probably added a kind of rivalry, which may justly have affected one of them with an irritated humiliation. Sheridan was twenty years younger than Burke, and did not come into Parliament until Burke had fought the prolonged battle of the American war, and had achieved the victory of Economic Reform. Yet Sheridan was immediately taken up by the party, and became the intimate and counsellor of Charles Fox, its leader, and of the Prince of Wales, its patron. That Burke never failed to do full justice to Sheridan's brilliant genius, or to bestow generous and unaffected praise on his oratorical successes, there is ample evidence. He was of far too high and veracious a nature to be capable of the disparaging tricks of a poor jealousy. The humiliation lay in the fact that circumstances had placed Sheridan in a position which made it natural for the world to measure them with one another. Burke could no more like Sheridan than he could like the *Beggar's Opera.* Sheridan had a levity, a want of depth, a laxity, and dispersion of feeling, to which no degree of intellectual brilliancy could reconcile a man of such profound moral energy and social conviction as Burke.

The thought will perhaps occur to the reader that Fox was not less lax than Sheridan, and yet for Fox Burke long had the sincerest friendship. He was dissolute, indolent, irregular, and the most insensate gambler that ever squandered fortune after fortune over the faro-table. It was his vices as much as his politics, that made George III. hate Fox as an English Catiline. How came Burke to accept a man of this character, first for his disciple, then for his friend, and next for his leader? The answer is a simple one. In spite of the disorders of his life, Fox, from the time when his acquaintance with Burke began, down to the time when it came to such disastrous end, and for long years afterwards, was to the bottom of his heart as passionate for freedom, justice, and beneficence as Burke ever was. These great ends were as real, as constant, as overmastering in Fox as they were in Burke. No man was ever more deeply imbued with the generous impulses of great statesmanship, with chivalrous courage, with the magnificent spirit of devotion to high imposing causes. These qualities, we may be sure, and not his power as a debater and as a declaimer, won for

him in Burke's heart the admiration which found such splendid expression in a passage, that will remain as a stock piece of declamation for long generations after it was first poured out as a sincere tribute of reverence and affection. Precisians, like Lafayette, might choose to see their patriotic hopes ruined rather than have them saved by Mirabeau, because Mirabeau was a debauchee. Burke's public morality was of stouter stuff, and he loved Fox because he knew that under the stains and blemishes that had been left by a deplorable education was that sterling, inexhaustible ore in which noble sympathies are subtly compounded with resplendent powers.

If he was warmly attached to his political friends, Burke, at least before the Revolution, was usually on fair terms in private life with his political opponents. There were few men whose policy he disliked more than he disliked the policy of George Grenville. And we have seen that he criticised Grenville in a pamphlet which did not spare him. Yet Grenville and he did not refuse one another's hospitality, and were on the best terms to the very end. Wilberforce, again, was one of the staunchest friends of Pitt, and fought one of the greatest electioneering battles on Pitt's side in the struggle of 1784; but it made no difference in Burke's relations with him. In 1787 a coldness arose between them. Burke had delivered a strong invective against the French Treaty. Wilberforce said, "We can make allowance for the honourable gentleman, because we remember him in better days." The retort greatly nettled Burke, but the feeling soon passed away, and they both found a special satisfaction in the dinner to which Wilberforce invited Burke every session. "He was a great man," says Wilberforce. "I could never understand how at one time he grew to be so entirely neglected."

Outside of both political and literary circles, among Burke's correspondents was that wise and honest traveller whose name is as inseparably bound up with the preparation of the French Revolution, as Burke's is bound up with its sanguinary climax and fulfilment. Arthur Young, by his Farmer's Letters, and Farmer's Calendar, and his account of his travels in the southern countries of England and elsewhere—the story of the more famous travels in France was not published until 1792—had won a reputation as the best-informed agriculturist of his day, Within a year of his settlement at Beaconsfield, we find Burke writing to consult Young on the mysteries of his new occupation. The reader may smile as he recognises the ardour, the earnestness, the fervid gravity of the political speeches, in letters which discuss the merits of carrots in fattening porkers, and the precise degree to which they should be boiled. Burke throws himself just as eagerly into white peas and Indian corn, into cabbages that grow into head and cabbages that shoot into leaves, into experiments with pumpkin seed and wild parsnip, as if they had been details of the Stamp Act, or justice to Ireland. When he complains that it is scarcely possible for him, with his numerous avocations, to get his servants to enter fully into his views

as to the right treatment of his-crops, we can easily understand that his farming did not help him to make money, It is impossible that he should have had time or attention to spare for the effectual direction of even a small farm.

Yet if the farm brought scantier profit than it ought to have brought, it was probably no weak solace in the background of a life of harassing interests and perpetual disappointments. Burke was happier at Beaconsfield than anywhere else, and he was happiest there when his house was full of guests. Nothing pleased him better than to drive a visitor over to Windsor, where he would expatiate with enthusiasm "on the proud Keep, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers, overseeing and guarding the subjected land." He delighted to point out the house at Uxbridge where Charles I. had carried on the negotiations with the Parliamentary Commissioners; the beautiful grounds of Bulstrode, where Judge Jefferies had once lived; and the church-yard of Beaconsfield, where lay the remains of Edmund Waller, the poet. He was fond of talking of great statesmen—of Walpole, of Pulteney, and of Chatham. Some one had said that Chatham knew nothing whatever except Spenser's *Faery Queen.* "No matter how that was said," Burke replied to one of his visitors, "whoever relishes and reads Spenser as he ought to be read, will have a strong hold of the English language." The delight of the host must have been at least equalled by the delight of the guest in conversation which was thus ever taking new turns, branching into topical surprises, and at all turns and on every topic was luminous, high, edifying, full.

No guest was more welcome than the friend of his boyhood; and Richard Shackleton has told how the friendship, cordiality, and openness with which Burke embraced him was even more than might be expected from long love. The simple Quaker was confused by the sight of what seemed to him so sumptuous and worldly a life, and he went to rest uneasily, doubting whether God's blessing could go with it. But when he awoke on the morrow of his first visit, he told his wife, in the language of his sect, how glad he was "to find no condemnation; but on the contrary, ability to put up fervent petitions with much tenderness on behalf of this great luminary." Itis at his county home that we like best to think of Burke. It is still a touching picture to the historic imagination to follow him from the heatand violence of the House, where tipsy squires derided the greatest genius of his time, down to the calm shades of Beaconsfield, where he would with his own hands give food to a starving beggar, or medicine to a peasant sick of the ague; where he would talk of the weather, the turnips, and the hay with the team-men and the farm-bailiff; and where, in the evening stillness, he would pace the walk under the trees, and reflect on the state of Europe and the distractions of his country.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW MINISTRY — WARREN HASTINGS — BURKE'S PUBLIC POSITION.

THE six years which followed the destruction of the Coalition were, in some respects, the most mortifying portion of Burke's troubled career. Pitt was more firmly seated in power than Lord North had ever been, and he used his power to carry out a policy against which it was impossible for the Whigs, on their own principles, to offer an effective resistance. For this is the peculiarity of the King's first victory over the enemies who had done obstinate battle with him for nearly a quarter of a century. He had driven them out of the field, but with the aid of an ally who was as strongly hostile to the royal system as they had ever been. The King had vindicated his right against the Whigs to choose his own ministers; but the new minister was himself a Whig by descent, and a reformer by his education and personal disposition.

Ireland was the subject of the first great battle between the ministry and their opponents. Here, if anywhere, we might have expected from Burke at least his usual wisdom and patience. We saw in a previous chapter (p. 21) what the political condition of Ireland was when Burke went there with Hamilton in 1763. The American war had brought about a great change. The King had shrewdly predicted that if America became free, Ireland would soon follow the same plan and be a separate state. In fact, along with the American war we had to encounter an Irish war also; but the latter was, as an Irish politician called it at the time, a smothered war. Like the Americans, the Anglo-Irish entered into non-importation compacts, and they interdicted commerce. The Irish volunteers, first forty, then sixty, and at last a hundred thousand strong, were virtually an army enrolled to overawe the English ministry and Parliament. Following the spirit, if not the actual path, of the Americans, they raised a cry for commercial and legislative independence. They were too strong to be resisted, and in 1782 the Irish Parliament acquired the privilege of initiating and conducting its own business, without the sanction or control either of the Privy Council or of the English Parliament. Dazzled by the chance of acquiring legislative independence, they had been content with the comparatively small commercial boons obtained by Lord Nugent and Burke in 1778, and with the removal of fur-

ther restrictions by the alarmed minister in the following year. After the concession of their independence in 1782, they found that to procure the abolition of the remaining restrictions on their commerce—the right of trade, for instance, with America and Africa—the consent of the English legislature was as necessary as it had ever been. Pitt, fresh from the teaching of Adam Smith and of Shelburne, brought forward in 1785 his famous commercial propositions. The theory of his scheme was that Irish trade should be free, and that Ireland should be admitted to a permanent participation in commercial advantages. In return for this gain, after her hereditary revenue passed a certain point, she was to devote the surplus to purposes, such as the maintenance of the navy, in which the two nations had a common interest. Pitt was to be believed when he declared that, of all the objects of his political life, this was, in his opinion, the most important that he had ever engaged in, and he never expected to meet another that should rouse every emotion in so strong a degree at this.

A furious battle took place in the Irish Parliament. There, while nobody could deny that the eleven propositions would benefit the mercantile interests of the country, it was passionately urged that the last of the propositions, that which concerned the apportionment of Irish revenue to imperial purposes, meant the enslavement of their unhappy island. Their fetters, they went on, were clenched, if the English Government was to be allowed thus to take the initiative in Irish legislation. The factious course pursued by the English Opposition was much less excusable than the line of the Anglo-Irish leaders. Fox, who was ostentatiously ignorant of political economy, led the charge. He insisted that Pitt's measures would annihilate English trade, would destroy the Navigation Laws, and with them would bring our maritime strength to the ground. Having thus won the favour of the English manufacturers, he turned round to the Irish Opposition, and conciliated them by declaring with equal vehemence that the propositions were an insult to Ireland, and a nefarious attempt to tamper with her newborn liberties. Burke followed his leader. We may almost say that for once he allowed his political integrity to be bewildered. In 1778 and 1779 he had firmly resisted the pressure which his mercantile constituents in Bristol had endeavoured to put upon him; he had warmly supported the Irish claims, and had lost his seat in consequence. The precise ground which he took up in 1785 was this. He appears to have discerned in Pitt's proposals the germ of an attempt to extract revenue from Ireland, identical in purpose, principle, and probable effect with the ever-memorable attempt to extract revenue from the American Colonies. Whatever stress may be laid upon this, we find it hard to vindicate Burke from the charge of factiousness. Nothing can have been more unworthy of him than the sneer at Pitt in the great speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts (1785), for stopping to pick up chaff and straws from the Irish revenue, instead of checking profligate expenditure in India.

Pitt's alternative was irresistible. Situated as Ireland was, she must either be the subservient instrument of English prosperity, or else she must be allowed to enjoy the benefits of English trade, taking at the same time a proportionate share of the common burdens. Adam Smith had shown that there was nothing incompatible with justice in a contribution by Ireland to the public debt of Great Britain. That debt, he argued, had been contracted in support of the government established by the Revolution; a government to which the Protestants of Ireland owed not only the whole authority which they enjoyed in their own country, but every security which they possessed for their liberty, property, and religion. The neighbourhood of Ireland to the shores of the mother country introduced an element into the problem, which must have taught every unimpassioned observer that the American solution would be inadequate for a dependency that lay at our very door. Burke could not, in his calmer moments, have failed to recognise all this. Yet he lent himself to the party cry that Pitt was taking his first measures for the re-enslavement of Ireland. Had it not been for what he himself called the delirium of the preceding session, and which had still not subsided, he would have seen that Pitt was in truth taking his first measures for the effective deliverance of Ireland from an unjust and oppressive subordination. The same delirium committed him to another equally deplorable perversity, when he opposed, with as many excesses in temper as fallacies in statesmanship, the wise treaty with France, in which Pitt partially anticipated the commercial policy of an ampler treaty three-quarters of a century afterwards.

A great episode in Burke's career now opened. It was in 1785 that Warren Hastings returned from India, after a series of exploits as momentous and far-reaching, for good or evil, as have ever been achieved by any English ruler. For years Burke had been watching India. With rising wonder, amazement, and indignation he had steadily followed that long train of intrigue and crime which had ended in the consolidation of a new empire. With the return of Hastings he felt that the time had come for striking a severe blow and making a signal example. He gave notice (June, 1785) that he would, at a future day, make a motion respecting the conduct of a gentleman just returned from India.

Among minor considerations, we have to remember that Indian affairs entered materially into the great battle of parties. It was upon an Indian bill that the late ministry had made shipwreck. It was notoriously by the aid of potent Indian interests that the new ministry had acquired a portion of its majority. To expose the misdeeds of our agents in India was at once to strike the minister who had dexterously secured their support, and to attack one of the great strongholds of parliamentary corruption. The proceedings against Hastings were, in the first instance, regarded as a sequel to the struggle over Fox's East India Bill. That these considerations were present in Burke's thought there is no doubt, but they were purely secondary. It was India itself that stood

above all else in his imagination. It had filled his mind and absorbed his time while Pitt was still an under-graduate at Cambridge, and Burke was looking forward to match his plan of economic reform with a greater plan of Indian reform. In the Ninth Report, the Eleventh Report, and in his speech on the India Bill of 1783, he had shown both how thoroughly he had mastered the facts, and how profoundly they had stirred his sense of wrong. The master-piece known as the Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, delivered in Parliament on a motion for papers (1785), handles matters of account, of interest turned into principal, and principal superadded to principal; it deals with a hundred minute technicalities of teeps and tuncaws, of gomastahs and soucaring; all with such a suffusion of interest and colour, with such nobility of idea and expression, as could only have come from the addition to genius of a deep morality of nature and an overwhelming force of conviction. A space less than one of these pages contains such a picture of the devastation of the Carnatic by Hyder Ali as may fill the young orator or the young writer with the same emotions of enthusiasm, emulation, and despair that torment the artist who first gazes on the Madonna at Dresden, or the figures of Night and Dawn and the Penseroso at Florence. The despair is only too well founded. No conscious study could pierce the secret of that just and pathetic transition from the havoc of Hyder Ali to the healing duties of a virtuous government, to the consolatory celebrating of the mysteries of justice and humanity, to the warning to the unlawful creditors to silence their inauspicious tongues in presence of the holy work of restoration, to the generous proclamation against them that in every country the first creditor is the plough. The emotions which make the hidden force of such pictures come not by observation. They grow from the sedulous meditation of long years, directed by a powerful intellect and inspired by an interest in human well-being, which of its own virtue bore the orator into the sustaining air of the upper gods. Concentrated passion and exhaustive knowledge have never entered into a more formidable combination. Yet, when Burke made his speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, Pitt and Grenville consulted together whether it was worth answering, and came to the conclusion that they need not take the trouble.

Neither the scornful neglect of his opponents, nor the dissuasions of some who sat on his own side, could check the ardour with which Burke pressed on, as he said, to the relief of afflicted nations. The fact is, that Burke was not at all a philanthropist as Clarkson and Wilberforce were philanthropists. His sympathy was too strongly under the control of true political reason. In 1780, for instance, the slave-trade had attracted his attention, and he had even proceeded to sketch out a code of regulations which provided for its immediate mitigation and ultimate suppression. After mature consideration he abandoned the attempt, from the conviction that the strength of the West India interest would defeat the utmost efforts of his party. And he was quite right in refusing

to hope from any political action what could only be affected after the moral preparation of the bulk of the nation. And *direct* moral or philanthropic apostleship was not his function.

Macaulay, in a famous passage of dazzling lustre and fine historic colour, describes Burke's holy rage against the misdeeds of Hastings as due to his sensibility. But sensibility to what? Not merely to those common impressions of human suffering which kindle the flame of ordinary philanthropy, always attractive, often so beneficent, but often so capricious and so laden with secret detriment. This was no part of Burke's type. Nor is it enough to say that Burke had what is the distinctive mark of the true statesman—a passion for good, wise, and orderly government. He had that in the strongest degree. All that wore the look of confusion he held in abhorrence, and he detected the seeds of confusion with a penetration that made other men marvel. He was far too wise a man to have any sympathy with the energetic exercise of power for power's sake. He knew well that triumphs of violence are for the most part little better than temporary make-shifts, which leave all the work of government to be encountered afterwards by men of essentially greater capacity than the hero of force without scruple. But he regarded those whom he called the great bad men of the old stamp, Cromwell, Richelieu, the Guises, the Condés, with a certain tolerance, because "though the virtues of such men were not to be taken as a balance to their crimes, yet they had long views, and sanctified their ambition by aiming at the orderly rule, and not the destruction of their country." What he valued was the deep-seated order of systems that worked by the accepted uses, opinions, beliefs, prejudices of a community.

This love of right and stable order was not all. That was itself the growth from a deeper root, partly of conviction and partly of sympathy; the conviction of the rare and difficult conjunctures of circumstance which are needed for the formation of even the rudest forms of social union among mankind; and then the sympathy that the best men must always find it hard to withhold from any hoary fabric of belief, and any venerated system of government, that has cherished a certain order, and shed even a ray of faintest dawn, among the violences and the darkness of the race. It was reverence rather than sensibility, a noble and philosophic conservatism rather than philanthropy, which raised that storm in Burke's breast against the rapacity of English adventurers in India, and the imperial crimes of Hastings. Exactly the same tide of emotion which afterwards filled to the brim the cup of prophetic anger against the desecrators of the church and the monarchy of France, now poured itself out against those who in India had "tossed about, subverted and tore to pieces, as if it were in the gambols of boyish unluckiness and malice, the most established rights, and the most ancient and most revered institutions of ages and nations." From beginning to end of fourteen years in which Burke pursued his campaign against Hastings, we see in every page that the India which ever glowed before his vision was not the home of pictur-

esque usages and melodramatic costume, but rather, in his own words, the land of princes once of great dignity, authority, and opulence; of an ancient and venerable priesthood, the guides of the people while living, and their consolation in death; of a nobility of antiquity and renown; of millions of ingenious mechanics, and millions of diligent tillers of the earth; and finally, the land where might be found almost all the religions professed by men—the Brahminical, the Mussulman, the Eastern and the Western Christian. When he published his speech on the Nabob of Arcot, Burke prefixed to it an admirable quotation from one of the letters of the Emperor Julian. And Julian too, as we all know, had a strong feeling for the past. But what in that remarkable figure was only the sentimentalism of reaction, in Burke was a reasoned and philosophic veneration for all old and settled order, whether in the free Parliament of Great Britain, in the ancient absolutism of Versailles, or in the secular pomp of Oude, and the inviolable sanctity of Benares, the holy city and the garden of God.

It would be out of place here to attempt to follow the details of the impeachment. Every reader has heard that great tale in our history, and everybody knows that it was Burke's tenacity and power which caused that tale to be told. The House of Commons would not, it is true, have directed that Hastings should be impeached unless Pitt had given his sanction and approval, and how it was that Pitt did give his sanction and approval so suddenly and on grounds ostensibly so slender, remains one of the secrets of history. In no case would the impeachment have been pressed upon Parliament by the Opposition, and assented to by ministers, if Burke had not been there with his prodigious industry, his commanding comprehensive vision, his burning zeal, and his power of kindling in men so different from him and from one another as Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Grey, a zeal only less intense than his own.

It was in the spring of 1786 that the articles of charge of Hastings's high crimes and misdemeanours, as Burke had drawn them, were presented to the House of Commons. It was in February, 1788, that Burke opened the vast cause in the old historic hall at Westminster, in an oration in which at points he was wound up to such a pitch of eloquence and passion that every listener, including the great criminal, held his breath in an agony of horror; that women were carried out fainting; that the speaker himself became incapable of saying another word, and the spectators of the scene began to wonder whether he would not, like the mighty Chatham, actually die in the exertion of his overwhelming powers. Among the illustrious crowd who thronged Westminster Hall in the opening days of the impeachment, was Fanny Burney. She was then in her odious bondage at Court, and was animated by that admiration and pity for Hastings which at Court was the fashion. Windham used to come up from the box of the managers of the impeachment to talk over with her the incidents of the day, and she gave him her impressions of Burke's speech, which were probably those of the majority of his hearers, for the majority were favour-

able to Hastings. "I told him," says Miss Burney, "that Mr. Burke's opening had struck me with the highest admiration of his powers, from the eloquence, the imagination, the fire, the diversity of expression, and the ready flow of language with which he seemed gifted, in a most superior manner, for any and every purpose to which rhetoric could lead." "And when he came to his two narratives," I continued, "when he related the particulars of those dreadful murders, he interested, he engaged, he at last overpowered me; I felt my cause lost. I could hardly keep on my seat. My eyes dreaded a single glance towards a man so accused as Mr. Hastings; I wanted to sink on the floor, that they might be saved so painful a sight. I had no hope he could clear himself; not another wish in his favour remained. But when from his narration Mr. Burke proceeded to his own comments and declamation—when the charges of rapacity, cruelty, tyranny, were general, and made with all the violence of personal detestation, and continued and aggravated without any further fact or illustration; then there appeared more of study than of truth, more of invective than of justice; and, in short, so little of proof to so much of passion, that in a very short time I began to lift up my head, my seat was no longer uneasy, my eyes were indifferent which way they looked, or what object caught them, and before I was myself aware of the declension of Mr. Burke's powers over my feelings, I found myself a mere spectator in a public place, and looking all round it with my opera-glass in my hand!"

In 1795, six years after Burke's opening, the Lords were ready with their verdict. It had long been anticipated. Hastings was acquitted. This was the close for the fourteen years of labour, from the date of the Select Committee of 1781. "If I were to call for a reward," Burke said, "it would be for the services in which for fourteen years, without intermission, I showed the most industry and had the least success. I mean the affairs of India; they are those on which I value myself the most; most for the importance; most for the labour; most for the judgment; most for constancy and perseverance in the pursuit."

The side that is defeated on a particular issue, is often victorious in the wide and general outcome. Looking back across the ninety years that divided us from that memorable scene in Westminster Hall, we may see that Burke had more success than at first appeared. If he did not convict the man, he overthrew a system, and stamped its principles with lasting censure and shame. Burke had perhaps a silent conviction that it would have been better for us and for India if Clive had succeeded in his attempt to blow out his own brains in the Madras counting-house, or if the battle of Plassy had been a decisive defeat instead of a decisive victory. "All these circumstances," he once said, in reference to the results of the investigation of the Select Committee, "are not, I confess, very favourable to the idea of our attempting to govern India at all. But there we are: there we are placed by the Sovereign Disposer, and we must do the best we can in our situation.

The situation of man is the preceptor of his duty." If that situation is better understood now than it was a century ago, and that duty more loftily conceived, the result is due, so far as such results can ever be due to one man's action apart from the confluence of the deep impersonal elements of time, to the seeds of justice and humanity which were sown by Burke and his associates. Nobody now believes that Clive was justified in tricking Omichund by forging another man's name; that Impey was justified in hanging Nuncomar for committing the very offence for which Clive was excused or applauded, although forgery is no grave crime according to Hindoo usage, and it is the gravest according to English usage; that Hastings did well in selling English troops to assist in the extermination of a brave people with whom he was at peace; that Benfield did well in conniving with an Eastern prince in a project of extortion against his subjects. The whole drift of opinion has changed, and it is since the trial of Hastings that the change has taken place. The question in Burke's time was whether oppression and corruption were to continue to be the guiding maxims of English policy. The personal disinterestedness of the ruler who had been the chief founder of this policy, and had most openly set aside all pretence of righteous principle, was dust in the balance. It was impossible to suppress the policy without striking a deadly blow at its most eminent and powerful instrument. That Hastings was acquitted, was immaterial. The lesson of his impeachment had been taught with sufficiently impressive force—the great lesson that Asiatics have rights, and that Europeans have obligations; that a superior race is bound to observe the highest current morality of the time in all its dealings with the subject race. Burke is entitled to our lasting reverence as the first apostle and great upholder of integrity, mercy, and honour in the relation between his countrymen and their humble dependents.

He shared the common fate of those who dare to strike a blow for human justice against the prejudices of national egotism. But he was no longer able to bear obloquy and neglect, as he had borne it through the war with the colonies. When he opened the impeachment of Hastings at Westminster, Burke was very near to his sixtieth year. Hannah More noted in 1786 that his vivacity had diminished, and that business and politics had impaired his agreeableness. The simpletons in the House, now that they had at last found in Pitt a political chief who could beat the Whig leaders on their own ground of eloquence, knowledge, and dexterity in debate, took heart as they had never done under Lord North. They now made deliberate attempts to silence the veteran by unmannerly and brutal interruptions of which a mob of lower class might have been ashamed. Then suddenly came a moment of such excitement as has not often been seen in the annals of party. It became known one day, in the autumn of 1788, that the King had gone out of his mind.

The news naturally caused the liveliest agitation among the Whigs. When the severity of the attack forced the ministry to

make preparations for a Regency, the friends or the Prince of Wales assumed that they would speedily return to power, and hastened to form their plans accordingly. Fox was travelling in Italy with Mrs. Armitage, and he had been two months away without hearing a word from England. The Duke of Portland sent a messenger in search of him, and after a journey of ten days the messenger found him at Bologna. Fox instantly set off in all haste for London, which he reached in nine days. The three months that followed were a time of unsurpassed activity and bitterness, and Burke was at least as active and as bitter as the rest of them. He was the writer of the Prince of Wales's letter to Pitt, sometimes set down to Sheridan, and sometimes to Gilbert Elliot. It makes us feel how naturally the style of ideal kingship, its dignity, calm, and high self-consciousness all came to Burke. Although we read of his thus drawing up manifestoes and protests, and deciding minor questions for Fox, which Fox was too irresolute to decide for himself, yet we have it on Burke's own authority that some time elapsed after the return to England before he even saw Fox; that he was not consulted as to the course to be pursued in the grave and difficult questions connected with the Regency: and that he knew as little of the inside of Carlton House, where the Prince of Wales lived, as of Buckingham House, where the King lived. "I mean to continue here," he says to Charles Fox, "until you call upon me; and I find myself perfectly easy, from the implicit confidence that I have in you and the Duke, and the certainty that I am in that you two will do the best for the general advantage of of the cause. In that state of mind I feel no desire whatsoever of interfering," Yet the letter itself, and others which follow, testify to the vehemence of Burke's interest in the matter, and to the persistency with which he would have had them follow his judgment, if they would have listened. It is as clear that they did not listen.

Apart from the fierce struggle against Pitt's Regency Bill, Burke's friends were intently occupied with the reconstruction of the Portland cabinet, which the King had so unexpectedly dismissed five years before. This was a sphere in which Burke's gifts were neither required nor sought. We are rather in distress, Sir Gilbert Elliot writes, for a proper man for the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord J. Cavendish is very unwilling to engage again in public affairs. Fox is to be Secretary of State. Burke, it is thought, would not be approved of, Sheridan has not the public confidence, and so it comes down therefore to Grey, Pelham, myself, and perhaps Windham." Elliot was one of Burke's most faithful and attached friends, and he was intimately concerned in all that was going on in the inner circle of the party. It is worth while, therefore, to reproduce his account, from a confidential letter to Lady Elliot, of the way in which Burke's claim to recognition was at this time regarded and dealt with.

Although I can tell you nothing positive about my own situation, I was made very happy indeed yesterday by co-operatting in the settlement

of Burke's, in a manner which gives us great joy as well as comfort. The Duke of Portland has felt distressed how to arrange Burke and his family in a manner equal to Burke's merits, and to the Duke's own wishes, and at the same time so as to be exempt from the many difficulties which seem to be in the way. He sent for Pelham and me, as Burke's friends and his own, to advise with us about it; and we dined yesterday with him and the Duchess, that we might have time to talk the thing over at leisure and without interruption after dinner. We stayed, accordingly, engaged in that subject till almost twelve at night, and our conference ended most happily, and excessively to the satisfaction of us all. The Duke of Portland has the veneration for Burke that Windham, Pelham, myself, and a few more have, and he thinks it impossible to do too much for him. He considers the reward to be given to Burke as a credit and honour to the nation, and he considers the neglect of him and his embarrassed situation as having been long a reproach to the country. The unjust prejudice and clamour which has prevailed against him and his family only determine the Duke the more to do him justice. The question was how? First, his brother Richard, who was Secretary to the Treasury before, will have the same office now, but the Duke intends to give him one of the first offices which falls vacant of about 1000*l.* a year for life in the Customs, and he will then resign the Secretary to the Treasury, which, however, in the meanwhile is worth 3000*l.* a year. Edmund Burke is to have the Pay Office, 4000*l.* a year; but as that is precarious and he can leave no provision for his son, it would, in fact, be doing little or nothing of any real or substantial value unless some *permanent* provision is added to it. In this view the Duke is to grant him on the Irish establishment a pension of 2000*l.* a year *clear* for his own life, and the other half to Mrs. Burke for her life. This will make Burke completely happy, by leaving his wife and son safe from want after his death, if they should survive him. The Duke's affectionate anxiety to accomplish this object, and his determination to set all clamour at defiance on this point of justice, was truly affecting, and increases my attachment for the Duke. . . . The Duke said the only objection to this plan was that he thought it was due from this country, and that he grudged the honour of it to Ireland; but as nothing in England was ready, this plan was settled. You may think it strange that to this moment Burke does not know a word of all this, and his family are indeed, I believe, suffering a little under the apprehension that he may be neglected in the general scramble. I believe there never were three cabinet counsellors more in harmony on any subject than we were, nor three people happier in their day's work.*

This leaves the apparent puzzle where it was. Why should Burke not be approved of for Chancellor of the Exchequer? What were the many difficulties described as seeming to be in the way of arranging for Burke, in a manner equal to Burke's merits and the Duke of Portland's wishes? His personal relations with the chiefs of his party were at this time extremely cordial and intimate. He was constantly a guest at the Duke of Portland's most private dinner-parties. Fox had gone down to Beaconsfield to recruit himself from the fatigues of his rapid journey from Bologna, and to spend some days in quiet with Windham and the master of the house. Elliot and Windham, who were talked about for a post for which one of them says that Burke would not have been approved, vied

* *Life and Letters of Sir G. Elliot*, i. 261-3.

with one another in adoring Burke. Finally, Elliot and the Duke think themselves happy in a day's work which ended in consigning the man who not only was, but was admitted to be, the most powerful genius of their party, to a third-rate post, and that most equivocal distinction, a pension on the Irish establishment. The common explanation that it illustrates Whig exclusiveness cannot be seriously received as adequate. It is probable, for one thing, that the feelings of the Prince of Wales had more to do with it than the feelings of men like the Duke of Portland or Fox. We can easily imagine how little that most worthless of human creatures would appreciate the great qualities of such a man as Burke. The painful fact which we are unable to conceal from ourselves is, that the common opinion of better men than the Prince of Wales leaned in the same direction. His violence in the course of the Regency debates had produced strong disapproval in the public and downright consternation in his own party. On one occasion he is described by a respectable observer as having "been wilder than ever, and laid himself and his party more open than ever speaker did. He is folly personified, but shaking his cap and bells under the laurel of genius. He finished his wild speech in a manner next to madness." Moore believes that Burke's indiscretions in these trying and prolonged transactions sowed the seeds of the alienation between him and Fox two years afterwards. Burke's excited state of mind showed itself in small things as well as great. Going with Windham to Carlton House. Burke attacked him in the coach for a difference of opinion about the affairs of a friend, and behaved with such unreasonable passion and such furious rudeness of manner, that his magnanimous admirer had some difficulty in obliterating the impression. The public were less tolerant. Windham has told us that at this time Burke was a man decried, persecuted, and proscribed, not being much valued even by his own party, and by half the nation considered as little better than an ingenious madman.* This is evidence beyond impeachment, for Windham loved and honoured Burke with the affection and reverence of a son; and he puts the popular sentiment on record with grief and amazement. There is other testimony to the same effect. The late Lord Lansdowne, who must have heard the subject abundantly discussed by those who were most concerned in it, was once asked by a very eminent man of our own time why the Whigs kept Burke out of their cabinets. "Burke!" he cried; "he was so violent, so overbearing, so arrogant, so intractable, that to have got on with him in a cabinet would have been utterly and absolutely impossible."

On the whole, it seems to be tolerably clear that the difficulties in the way of Burke's promotion to high office were his notoriously straitened circumstances; his ungoverned excesses of party zeal and political passion; finally, what Sir Gilbert Elliot calls the unjust prejudice and clamour against him and his family, and what

* Windham's *Diary*, p. 213.

Burke himself once called the hunt of obloquy that pursued him all his life. The first two of these causes can scarcely have operated in the arrangements that were made in the Rockingham and Coalition ministries. But the third, we may be sure, was incessantly at work. It would have needed social courage alike in 1782, 1783, and 1788 to give cabinet rank to a man round whose name there floated so many disparaging associations. Social courage is exactly the virtue in which the constructors of a government will always think themselves least able to indulge. Burke, we have to remember, did not stand alone before the world. Elliot describes a dinner-party at Lord Fitzwilliams's, at which four of these half-discredited Irishmen were present. "Burke has now got such a train after him as would sink anybody but himself—his son, who is quite *nauseated* by all mankind; his brother, who is liked better than his son, but is rather offensive with animal spirits and with brogue; and his cousin, Will Burke, who is just returned unexpectedly from India, as much ruined as when he went many years ago, and who is a fresh charge on any prospects of power that Burke may ever have." It was this train, and the ideas of adventurership that clung to them, the inextinguishable stories about papistry and Saint Omer's, the tenacious calumny about the letters of Junius, the notorious circumstances of embarrassment and neediness—it was all these things which combined with Burke's own defects of temper and discretion, to give the Whig grandees as decent a reason as they could have desired for keeping all the great posts of state in their own hands.

It seems difficult to deny that the questions of the Regency had caused the germs of a sort of dissatisfaction and strain in the relations between Fox and Burke. Their feelings to one another have been well compared to the mutual discontent between partners in unsuccessful play, where each suspects that it is the mistakes of the other that lost the game. Whether Burke felt conscious of the failures in discretion and temper, which were the real or pretended excuse for neglect, we cannot tell. There is one passage that reveals a chagrin of this kind. A few days after the meeting between the Duke of Portland and Elliot, for the purpose of settling his place in the new ministry, Burke went down to Beaconsfield. In writing (January 24th, 1789) to invite Windham and Pelham to come to stay a night, with promise of a leg of mutton cooked by a dairy-maid who was not a bad hand at a pinch, he goes on to say that his health has received some small benefit from his journey to the country. "But this view to health, though far from unnecessary to me, was not the chief cause of my present retreat. I began to find that I was grown rather too anxious: and had begun to discover to myself and to others a solicitude relative to the present state of affairs, which, though their strange condition might well warrant it in others, is certainly less suitable to my time of life, in which all emotions are less allowed; and to which, most certainly, all human concerns ought in reason to become

more indifferent, than to those who have work to do, and a good deal of day, and of inexhausted strength, to do it in." *

The King's unexpected restoration to health two or three weeks later, brought to nought all the hope and ambition of the Whigs, and confirmed Pitt in power for the rest of Burke's lifetime. But an event now came to pass in the world's history which transformed Burke in an instant from a man decried, persecuted, proscribed, into an object of exultant adoration all over Europe.

* *Correspondence*, iii. 89.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

WE have now come to the second of the two momentous changes in the world's affairs, in which Burke played an imposing and historic part. His attitude in the first of them, the struggle for American independence, commands almost without alloy the admiration and reverence of posterity. His attitude in the second of them, the great revolution in France, has raised controversies which can only be compared in heat and duration to the master controversies of theology. If the history of society were written as learned men write the history of the Christian faith and its churches, Burke would figure in the same strong prominence, whether deplorable or glorious, as Arius and Athanasius, Augustine and Sabellius, Luther and Ignatius. If we ask how it is that now, nearly a century after the event, men are still discussing Burke's pamphlet on the Revolution as they are still discussing Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, the answer is that in one case as in the other the questions at issue are still unsettled, and that Burke offers in their highest and most comprehensive form all the considerations that belong to one side of the dispute. He was not of those of whom Coleridge said that they proceeded with much solemnity to solve the riddle of the French Revolution by anecdotes. He suspended it in the same light of great social ideas and wide principles, in which its authors and champions professed to represent it. Unhappily he advanced from criticism to practical exhortation, in our opinion the most mischievous and indefensible that has ever been pressed by any statesman on any nation. But the force of the criticism remains, its foresight remains, its commemoration of valuable elements of life which men were forgetting, its discernment of the limitations of things, its sense of the awful emergencies of the problem. When our grandchildren have made up their minds, once for all, as to the merits of the social transformation which dawned on Europe in 1789, then Burke's *Reflections* will become a mere literary antiquity, and not before.

From the very beginning Burke looked upon the proceedings in France with distrust. He had not a moment of enthusiasm or sympathy of which to repent. When the news reached England that the insurgents of Paris had stormed the Bastille Fox ex-

claimed with exultation, how much it was the greatest event that had ever happened in the world, how much the best. Is it an infirmity to wish, for an instant, that some such phrase of generous hope had escaped from Burke; that he had for a day or an hour undergone that fine illusion which was lighted up in the spirits of men like Wordsworth and Coleridge? Those great poets, who were destined one day to preach even a wiser and a loftier conservatism than his own, have told us what they felt—

> When France in wrath her giant limbs upreared,
> And with that oath, which smote air, earth and sea,
> Stamped her strong foot, and said she would be free.

Burke from the first espied the looming shadow of a catastrophe. In August he wrote to Lord Charlemont that the events in France had something paradoxical and mysterious about them; that the outbreak of the old Parisian ferocity might be no more than a sudden explosion, but if it should happen to be *character* rather than accident, then the people would need a strong hand like that of their former masters to coerce them; that all depended upon the French having wise heads among them, and upon these wise heads, if such there were, acquiring an authority to match their wisdom. There is nothing here but a calm and sagacious suspense of judgment. It soon appeared that the old Parisian ferocity was still alive. In the events of October, 1789, when the mob of Paris marched out to Versailles and marched back again with the King and Queen in triumphal procession, Burke felt in his heart that the beginning of the end had come, and that the catastrophe was already at hand. In October he wrote a long letter to the French gentleman to whom he afterwards addressed the *Reflections*. "You hope, sir," he said, "that I think the French deserving of liberty. I certainly do. I certainly think that all men who desire it deserve it. We cannot forfeit our right to it, but by what forfeits our title to the privileges of our kind. The liberty I mean is *social* freedom. It is that state of things in which liberty is secured by equality of restraint. This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for justice. *Whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is in my opinion safe.*" The weightiest and most important of all political truths, and worth half the fine things that poets have sung about freedom—if it could only have been respected, how different the course of the Revolution! But the engineer who attempts to deal with the abysmal rush of the falls of Niagara must put aside the tools that constructed the Bridgewater Canal and the Chelsea Waterworks. Nobody recognised so early as Burke that France had really embarked among cataracts and boiling gulfs, and the pith of all his first criticisms, including the *Reflections*, was the proposition that to separate freedom from justice was nothing else than to steer the ship of state direct into the Maelstrom. It is impossible to deny that this was true. Unfortunately it was a

truth which the wild spirits that were then abroad in the storm made of no avail.

Destiny aimed an evil stroke when Burke, whose whole soul was bound up in order, peace, and gently enlarged precedent, found himself face to face with the portentous man-devouring Sphinx. He, who could not endure that a few clergymen should be allowed to subscribe to the Bible instead of to the Articles, saw the ancient Church of Christendom prostrated, its possessions confiscated, its priests proscribed, and Christianity itself officially superseded. The economical reformer, who when his zeal was hottest declined to discharge a tide-waiter or a scullion in the royal kitchen, who should have acquired the shadow of a vested interest in his post, beheld two great orders stripped of their privileges and deprived of much of their lands, though their possession had been sanctified by the express voice of the laws and the prescription of many centuries. He, who was full of apprehension and anger at the proposal to take away a member of Parliament from St. Michael's or Old Sarum, had to look on while the most august monarchy in Europe was overturned. The man who dreaded fanatics, hated atheists, despised political theorisers, and was driven wild at the notion of applying metaphysical rights and abstract doctrines to public affairs, suddenly beheld a whole kingdom given finally up to fanatics, atheists, and theorisers, who talked of nothing but the rights of man, and deliberately set as wide a gulf as ruin and bloodshed could make between themselves and every incident or institution in the history of their land. The statesman who had once declared, and habitually proved his preference for peace over even truth, who had all his life surrounded himself with a mental paradise of order and equilibrium, in a moment found himself confronted by the stupendous and awful spectre which a century of disorder had raised in its supreme hour. It could not have been difficult for any one who had studied Burke's character and career, to foretell all that now came to pass with him.

It was from an English, and not from a French point of view, that Burke was first drawn to write upon the Revolution. The 4th of November was the anniversary of the landing of the Prince of Orange, and the first act in the Revolution of 1688. The members of an association which called itself the Revolution Society, chiefly composed of Dissenters, but not without a mixture of Churchmen, including a few peers and a good many members of the House of Commons, met as usual to hear a sermon in commemoration of the glorious day. Dr. Price was the preacher, and both in the morning sermon and in the speeches which fellowed in the festivities of the afternoon the French were held up to the loudest admiration, as having carried the principles of our own Revolution to a loftier height, and having opened boundless hopes to mankind. By these harmless proceedings Burke's anger and scorn were aroused to a pitch which must seem to us, as it seemed to not a few of his contemporaries, singularly out of all proportion to its cause. Deeper things were doubtless in silent motion within him. He set to work

upon a denunciation of Price's doctrines, with a velocity that reminds us of Aristotle's comparison of anger to the over-hasty servant, who runs off with all speed before he has listened to half the message. This was the origin of the *Reflections*. The design grew as the writer went on. His imagination took fire; his memory quickened a throng of impressive associations; his excited vision revealed to him a band of vain, petulant upstarts persecuting the ministers of a sacred religion, insulting a virtuous and innocent sovereign, and covering with humiliation the august daughter of the Cæsars; his mind teemed with the sage maxims of the philosophy of things established, and the precepts of the gospel of order. Every courier that crossed the Channel supplied new material to his contempt and his alarm. He condemned the whole method and course of the French reforms. His judgment was in suspense no more. He no longer distrusted; he hated, despised, and began to dread.

Men soon began to whisper abroad that Burke thought ill of what was going on over the water. When it transpired that he was writing a pamphlet, the world of letters was stirred with the liveliest expectation. The name of the author, the importance of the subject, and the singularity of his opinions, so Mackintosh informs us, all inflamed the public curiosity. Soon after Parliament met for the session (1790), the army estimates were brought up. Fox criticised the increase of our forces, and incidentally hinted something in praise of the French army, which had shown that a man could be a soldier without ceasing to be a citizen. Some days afterwards the subject was revived, and Pitt, as well as Fox, avowed himself hopeful of the good effect of the Revolution upon the order and government of France. Burke followed in a very different vein, openly proclaiming that dislike and fear of the Revolution which was to be the one ceaseless refrain of all that he spoke or wrote for the rest of his life. He deplored Fox's praise of the army for breaking their lawful allegiance, and then he proceeded with ominous words to the effect that, if any friend of his should concur in any measures which should tend to introduce such a democracy as that of France, he would abandon his best friends and join with his worst enemies to oppose either the means or the end. This has unanimously been pronounced one of the most brilliant and effective speeches that Burke ever made. Fox rose with distress on every feature, and made the often-quoted declaration of his debt to Burke: "If all the political information I have learned from books, all which I have gained from science, and all which my knowledge of the world and its affairs has taught me, were put into one scale, and the improvement which I have derived from my right honourable friend's instruction and conversation were placed in the other, I should be at a loss to decide to which to give the preference. I have learnt more from my right honourable friend than from all the men with whom I ever conversed." All seemed likely to end in a spirit of conciliation, until Sheridan rose, and in the plainest terms that he could find expressed his dissent from everything that Burke had said. Burke immedi-

ately renounced his friendship. For the first time in his life he found the sympathy of the House vehemently on his side.

In the following month (March, 1790) this unpromising incident was succeeded by an aberration which no rational man will now undertake to defend. Fox brought forward a motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. He did this in accordance with a recent suggestion of Burke's own, that he should strengthen his political position by winning the support of the Dissenters. Burke himself had always denounced the Test Act as bad, and as an abuse of sacred things. To the amazement of everybody, and to the infinite scandal of his party, he now pronounced the Dissenters to be disaffected citizens, and refused to relieve them. Well might Fox say that Burke's words had filled him with grief and shame.

Meanwhile the great rhetorical fabric gradually arose. Burke revised, erased, moderated, strengthened, emphasised, wrote and re-wrote with indefatigable industry. With the manuscript constantly under his eyes, he lingered busily, pen in hand, over paragraphs and phrases, antitheses and apophthegms. The *Reflections* was no superb improvisation. Its composition recalls Palma Giovine's account of the mighty Titian's way of working; how the master made his preparations with resolute strokes of a heavily-laden brush, and then turned his picture to the wall, and by-and-by resumed again, and then again and again, re-dressing, adjusting, modelling the light with a rub of his finger, or dabbing a spot of dark colour into some corner with a touch of his thumb, and finally working all his smirches, contrasts, abruptnesses, into the glorious harmony that we know. Burke was so unwearied in this insatiable correction and alteration, that the printer found it necessary, instead of making the changes marked upon the proof-sheets, to set up the whole in type afresh. The work was upon the easel for exactly a year. It was November (1790) before the result came into the hands of the public. It was a small octavo of three hundred and fifty-six pages, in contents rather less than twice the present volume, bound in an unlettered wrapper of grey paper, and sold for five shillings. In less than twelve months it reached its eleventh edition, and it has been computed that not many short of thirty thousand copies were sold within the next six years.

The first curiosity had languished in the course of the long delay, but it was revived in its strongest force when the book itself appeared. A remarkable effect instantly followed. Before the *Reflections* was published, the predominant sentiment in England had been one of mixed astonishment and sympathy. Pitt had expressed this common mood both in the House of Commons and in private. It was impossible for England not to be amazed at the uprising of a nation whom they had been accustomed to think of as willing slaves, and it was impossible for her, when the scene did not happen to be the American colonies or Ireland, not to profess good wishes for the cause of emancipation all over the world. Apart from the natural admiration of a free people for a neighbour

struggling to be free, England saw no reason to lament a blow to a sovereign and a government who had interfered on the side of her insurgent colonies. To this easy state of mind Burke's book put an immediate end. At once, as contemporaries assure us, it divided the nation into two parties. On both sides it precipitated opinion. With a long-resounding blast on his golden trumpet Burke had unfurled a new flag, and half the nation hurried to rally to it—that half which had scouted his views on America, which had bitterly disliked his plan of Economic Reform, which had mocked his ideas on religious toleration, and which a moment before had hated and reviled him beyond all men living, for his fierce tenacity in the impeachment of Warren Hastings. The King said to everybody who came near him that the book was a good book, a very good book, and every gentleman ought to read it. The universities began to think of offering the scarlet gown of their most honourable degree to the assailant of Price and the Dissenters. The great army of the indolent good, the people who lead excellent lives and never use their reason, took violent alarm. The timorous, the weak-minded, the bigoted, were suddenly awakened to a sense of what they owed to themselves. Burke gave them the key which enabled them to interpret the Revolution in harmony with their usual ideas and their temperament.

Reaction quickly rose to a high pitch. One preacher in a parish church in the neighbourhood of London celebrated the anniversary of the Restoration of King Charles II. by a sermon, in which the pains of eternal damnation were confidently promised to political disaffection. Romilly, mentioning to a friend that the *Reflections* had got into a fourteenth edition, wondered whether Burke was not rather ashamed of his success. It is when we come to the rank and file of reaction that we find it hard to forgive the man of genius who made himself the organ of their selfishness, their timidity, and their blindness. We know, alas! that the parts of his writings on French affairs to which they would fly were not likely to be the parts which calm men now read with sympathy, but the scoldings, the screamings, the unworthy vituperation with which, especially in the latest of them, he attacked everybody who took part in the Revolution, from Condorcet and Lafayette down to Marat and Couthon. It was the feet of clay that they adored in their image, and not the head of fine gold and the breasts and the arms of silver.

On the continent of Europe the excitement was as great among the ruling classes as it was at home. Mirabeau, who had made Burke's acquaintance some years before in England, and even been his guest at Beaconsfield, now made the *Reflections* the text of more than one tremendous philippic. Louis XVI. is said to have translated the book into French with his own hand. Catherine of Russia, Voltaire's adored Semiramis of the North, the benefactress of Diderot, the ready helper of the philosophic party, pressed her congratulations on the great pontiff of the old order, who now thundered anathema against philosophers and all their works.

It is important to remember the stage which the Revolution

had reached when Burke was composing his attack upon it. The year 1790 was precisely the time when the hopes of the best men in France shone most brightly, and seemed more reasonable. There had been disorders, and Paris still had ferocity in her mien. But Robespierre was an obscure figure on the back benches of the Assembly. Nobody ever heard of Danton. The name of Republic had never been so much as whispered. The King still believed that constitutional monarchy would leave him as much power as he desired. He had voluntarily gone to the National Assembly, and in simple language had exhorted them all to imitate his example by professing the single opinion, the single interest, the single wish—attachment to the new constitution, and ardent desire for the peace and happiness of France. The clergy, it is true, were violently irritated by the spoliation of their goods, and the nobles had crossed the Rhine, to brood impotently in the safety of Coblenz over projects of a bloody revenge upon their country. But France, meanwhile, paid little heed either to the anger of the clergy or the menaces of the emigrant nobles, and at the very moment when Burke was writing his most sombre pages, Paris and the provinces were celebrating with transports of joy and enthusiasm the civic oath, the federation, the restoration of concord to the land, the final establishment of freedom and justice in a regenerated France. This was the happy scene over which Burke suddenly stretched out the right arm of an inspired prophet, pointing to the cloud of thunder and darkness that was gathering on the hills, and proclaiming to them the doom that had been written upon the wall by the fingers of an inexorable hand. It is no wonder that when the cloud burst and the doom was fulfilled, men turned to Burke, as they went of old to Ahithophel, whose counsel was as if a man had inquired of the oracle of God.

It is not to our purpose to discuss all the propositions advanced in the *Reflections*, much less to reply to them. The book is like some temple, by whose structure and design we allow ourselves to be impressed, without being careful to measure the precise truth or fitness of the worship to which it was consecrated by its first founders. Just as the student of the *Politics* of Aristotle may well accept all the wisdom of it, without caring to protest at every turn against slavery as the basis of a society, so we may well cherish all the wisdom of the *Reflections*, at this distance of time, without marking as a rubric on every page that half of these impressive formulæ and inspiring declamations were irrelevant to the occasion which called them forth, and exercised for the hour an influence that was purely mischievous. Time permits to us this profitable lenity. In reading this, the first of his invectives, it is important for the sake of clearness of judgment to put from our minds the practical policy which Burke afterwards so untiringly urged upon his countrymen. As yet there is no exhortation to England to interfere, and we still listen to the voice of the statesman, and are not deafened by the passionate cries of the preacher of a crusade. When Burke wrote the *Reflections*, he was justified in criticising the

Revolution as an extraordinary movement, but still a movement professing to be conducted on the principles of rational and practicable politics. They were the principles to which competent onlookers like Jefferson and Morris had expected the Assembly to conform, but to which the Assembly never conformed for an instant. It was on the principles of rational politics that Fox and Sheridan admired it. On these principles Burke condemned it. He declared that the methods of the Constituent Assembly, up to the summer of 1790, were unjust, precipitate, destructive, and without stability. Men had chosen to build their house on the sands, and the winds and the seas would speedily beat against it and overthrow it.

His prophecy was f[illegible]d to the letter. What is still more important for the credit of his foresight is, that not only did his prophecy come true, but it came true for the reasons that he had fixed upon. It was, for instance, the constitution of the Church, in which Burke saw the worst of the many bad mistakes of the Assembly. History, now slowly shaking herself free from the passions of a century, agrees that the civil constitution of the clergy was the measure which, more than any other, decisively put an end to whatever hopes there might have been of a peaceful transition from the old order to the new. A still more striking piece of foresight is the prediction of the despotism of the Napoleonic Empire. Burke had compared the levelling policy of the Assembly in their geometrical division of the departments, and their isolation from one another of the bodies of the state, to the treatment which a conquered country receives at the hands of its conquerors. Like Romans in Greece or Macedon, the French innovators had destroyed the bonds of union, under colour of providing for the independence of each of their cities. "If the present project of a Republic should fail," Burke said, with a prescience really profound, "all securities to a moderate freedom fail with it. All the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed; insomuch that, if monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendancy in France under this or any other dynasty, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise and virtuous counsels of the prince, the most completely arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth." Almost at the same moment Mirabeau was secretly writing to the King, that their plan of reducing all citizens to a single class would have delighted Richelieu. This equal surface, he said, facilitates the exercise of power, and many reigns in an absolute government would not have done as much as this single year of revolution for the royal authority. Time showed that Burke and Mirabeau were right.

History ratifies nearly all Burke's strictures on the levity and precipitancy of the first set of actors in the revolutionary drama. No part of the *Reflections* is more energetic than the denunciation of geometric and literary methods; and these are just what the modern explorer hits upon, as one of the fatal secrets of the catastrophe. De Tocqueville's chapter on the causes which made liter

ary men the principal persons in France, and the effect which this had upon the Revolution (Bk. III. ch. i.), is only a little too cold to be able to pass for Burke's own. Quinet's work on the Revolution is one long sermon, full of eloquence and cogency, upon the incapacity and blindness of the men who undertook the conduct of a tremendous crisis upon mere literary methods, without the moral courage to obey the logic of their beliefs, with the student's ignorance of the eager passion and rapid imagination of multitudes of men, with the pedant's misappreciation of a people, of whom it has been said by one of themselves that there never was a nation more led by its sensations, and less by its principles. Comte, again, points impressively to the Revolution as the period which illustrates more decisively than another the peril of confounding the two great functions of speculation and political action; and he speaks with just reprobation of the preposterous idea in the philosophic politicians of the epoch, that society was at their disposal, independent of its past development, devoid of inherent impulses, and easily capable of being morally regenerated by the mere modification of legislative rules.

What then was it that, in the midst of so much perspicacity as to detail, blinded Burke, at the time when he wrote the *Reflections*, to the true nature of the movement? Is it not this, that he judges the Revolution as the solution of a merely political question? If the Revolution had been merely political, his judgment would have been adequate. The question was much deeper. It was a social question that burned under the surface of what seemed no more than a modification of external arrangements. That Burke was alive to the existence of social problems, and that he was even tormented by them, we know from an incidental passage in the *Reflections*. There he tells us how often he had reflected, and never reflected without feeling, upon the innumerable servile and degrading occupations to which, by the social economy, so many wretches are inevitably doomed. He had pondered whether there could be any means of rescuing these unhappy people from their miserable industry, without disturbing the natural course of things, and impeding the great wheel of circulation which is turned by their labour. This is the vein of that striking passage in his first composition, which I have already quoted (p. 16). Burke did not yet see, and probably never saw, that one key to the events which astonished and exasperated him, was simply that the persons most urgently concerned had taken the riddle which perplexed him into their own hands, and had in fiery earnest set about their own deliverance. The pith of the Revolution, up to 1790, was less the political constitution, of which Burke says so much, and so much that is true, but the social and economic transformation of which he says so little. It was not a question of the power of the King, or the measure of an electoral circumscription, that made the Revolution; it was the iniquitous distribution of the taxes, the scourge of the militia service, the scourge of the road service, the destructive tyranny exercised in the vast preserves of wild game, the vexatious rights and imposts

of the lords of manors, and all the other odious burdens and heavy impediments on the prosperity of the thrifty and industrious part of the nation. If he had seen ever so clearly that one of the most important sides of the Revolution in progress was the rescue of the tiller of the soil, Burke would still doubtless have viewed events with bitter suspicion. For the process could not be executed without disturbing the natural course of things, and without violating his principle that all changes should find us with our minds tenacious of justice and tender of property. A closer examination than he chose to give, of the current administration alike of justice and of property under the old system, would have explained to him that an hour had come in which the spirit of property and of justice compelled a supersession of the letter.

If Burke had insisted on rigidly keeping sensibility to the wrongs of the French people out of the discussion, on the ground that the whole subject was one of positive knowledge and logical inference, his position would have been intelligible and defensible. He followed no such course. His pleading turns constantly to arguments from feeling ; but it is always to feeling on one side, and to a sensibility that is only alive to the concentrated force of historic associations. How much pure and uncontrolled emotion had to do with what ought to have been the reasoned judgments of his understanding, we know on his own evidence. He had sent the proof-sheets of a part of his book to Sir Philip Francis. They contained the famous passage describing the French Queen as he had seen her seventeen years before at Versailles. Francis bluntly wrote to him that, in his opinion, all Burke's eloquence about Marie Antoinette was no better than pure foppery, and he referred to the Queen herself as no better than Messalina. Burke was so excited by this that his son, in a rather officious letter, begged Francis not to repeat such stimulating remonstrance. What is interesting in the incident is Burke's own reply. He knew nothing, he said, of the story of Messalina, and declined the obligation of proving judicially the virtues of all those whom he saw suffering wrong and contumely, before he endeavoured to interest others in their sufferings, and before endeavouring to kindle horror against midnight assassins at backstairs and their more wicked abettors in pulpits. And then he went on, "I tell you again that the recollection of the manner in which I saw the Queen of France in the year 1774 [1773], and the contrast between that brilliancy, splendour, and beauty, with the prostrate homage of a nation to her, and the abominable scene of 1789 which I was describing, *did* draw tears from me and wetted my paper. These tears came again into my eyes almost as often as I looked at the description—they may again."

The answer was obvious. It was well to pity the unmerited agonies of Marie Antoinette, though as yet, we must remember, she had suffered nothing beyond the indignities of the days of October at Versailles. But did not the protracted agonies of a nation deserve the tribute of a tear? As Paine asked, were men to

weep over the plumage, and forget the flying bird? The bulk of the people must labour, Burke told them, "to obtain what by labour can be obtained; and when they find, as they commonly do, the success disproportioned to the endeavour, they must be taught their consolation in the final proportions of eternal justice." When we know that a Lyons silkweaver, working as hard as he could for over seventeen hours a day, could not earn money enough to procure the most bare and urgent necessaries of subsistence, we may know with what benignity of brow eternal justice must have presented herself in the garret of that hapless wretch. It was no idle abstraction, no metaphysical right of man, for which the French cried, but only the practical right of being permitted, by their own toil, to save themselves and the little ones about their knees from hunger and cruel death. The *mainmortable* serfs of ecclesiastics are variously said to have been a million and a million and a half at the time of the Revolution. Burke's horror, as he thought of the priests and prelates who left palaces and dignities to earn a scanty living by the drudgery of teaching their language in strange lands, should have been alleviated by the thought that a million or more of men were rescued from ghastly material misery. Are we to be so overwhelmed with sorrow over the pitiful destiny of the men of exalted rank and sacred function, as to have no tears for the forty thousand serfs in the gorges of the Jura, who were held in dead-hand by the Bishop of Saint-Claude?

The simple truth is that Burke did not know enough of the subject about which he was writing. When he said, for instance, that the French before 1789 possessed all the elements of a constitution that might be made nearly as good as could be wished, he said what many of his contemporaries knew, and what all subsequent investigation and meditation have proved, to be recklessly ill-considered and untrue. As to the social state of France, his information was still worse. He saw the dangers and disorders of the new system, but he saw a very little way indeed into the more cruel dangers and disorders of the old. Mackintosh replied to the *Reflections* with manliness and temperance in the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*. Thomas Paine replied to them with an energy, courage, and eloquence worthy of his cause, in the *Rights of Man*. But the substantial and decisive reply to Burke came from his former correspondent, the farmer at Bradfield, in Suffolk. Arthur Young published his *Travels in France* some eighteen months after the *Reflections* (1792), and the pages of the twenty-first chapter, in which he closes his performance, as a luminous criticism of the most important side of the Revolution, are worth a hundred times more than Burke, Mackintosh, and Paine all put together. Young afterwards became panic-stricken, but his book remained. There the writer plainly enumerates without trope or invective the intolerable burdens under which the great mass of the French people had for long years been groaning. It was the removal of these burdens that made the very heart's core of the Revolution, and gave to France that new life which so soon astonished and terrified

Europe. Yet Burke seems profoundly unconscious of the whole of them. He even boldly asserts that, when the several orders met in their bailliages in 1789, to choose their representatives and draw up their grievances and instructions, in no one of these instructions did they charge, or even hint at, any of those things which had drawn upon the usurping Assembly the detestation of the rational part of mankind. He could not have made a more enormous blunder. There was not a single great change made by the Assembly which had not been demanded in the lists of grievances that had been sent up by the nation to Versailles. The division of the kingdom into districts, and the proportioning of the representation to taxes and population; the suppression of the intendants; the suppression of all monks, and the sale of their goods and estates; the abolition of feudal rights, duties, and services; the alienation of the King's domains; the demolition of the Bastille; these and all else were in the prayers of half the petitions that the country had laid at the feet of the King.

If this were merely an incidental blunder in a fact, it might be of no importance. But it was a blunder which went to the very root of the discussion. The fact that France was now at the back of the Assembly, inspiring its counsels and ratifying its decrees, was the cardinal element, and that is the fact which at this stage Burke systematically ignored. That he should have so ignored it, left him in a curious position, for it left him without any rational explanation of the sources of the policy which kindled his indignation and contempt. A publicist can never be sure of his position, until he can explain to himself even what he does not wish to justify to others. Burke thought it enough to dwell upon the immense number of lawyers in the Assembly, and to show that lawyers are naturally bad statesmen. He did not look the state of things steadily in the face. It was no easy thing to do. But Burke was a man who ought to have done it. He set all down to the ignorance, folly, and wickedness of the French leaders. This was as shallow as the way in which his enemies, the philosophers, used to set down the superstition of eighteen centuries to the craft of priests, and all defects in the government of Europe to the cruelty of tyrants. How it came about that priests and tyrants acquired their irresistible power over men's minds, they never inquired. And Burke never inquired into the enthusiastic acquiescence of the nation, and what was most remarkable of all, the acquiescence of the army, in the strong measures of the Assembly. Burke was, in truth, so appalled by the magnitude of the enterprise on which France had embarked, that he utterly forgot for once the necessity in political affairs, of seriously understanding the originating conditions of things. He was strangely content with the explanations that came from the malignants at Coblenz, and he actually told Francis that he charged the disorders not on the mob, but on the Duke of Orleans and Mirabeau, on Barnave and Bailly, on Lameth and Lafayette, who had spent immense sums of money, and used innumerable arts, to stir up the populace

throughout France to the commission of the enormities that were shocking the conscience of Europe. His imagination broke loose. His practical reason was mastered by something that was deeper in him than reason.

This brings me to remark a really singular trait. In spite of the predominance of practical sagacity, of the habits and spirit of public business, of vigorous actuality in Burke's character, yet at the bottom of all his thoughts about communities and governments there lay a certain mysticism. It was no irony, no literary trope, when he talked of our having taught the American husbandman "piously to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment." He was using no otiose epithet, when he described the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, "moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race." To him there actually was an element of mystery in the cohesion of men in societies, in political obedience, in the sanctity of contract; in all that fabric of law and charter and obligation, whether written or unwritten, which is the sheltering bulwark between civilisation and barbarism. When reason and history had contributed all that they could to the explanation, it seemed to him as if the vital force, the secret of organisation, the binding framework, must still come from the impenetrable regions beyond reasoning and beyond history. There was another great conservative writer of that age, whose genius was aroused into a protest against the revolutionary spirit, as vehement as Burke's. This was Joseph de Maistre, one of the most learned, witty, and acute of all reactionary philosophers. De Maistre wrote a book on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions. He could only find this principle in the operation of occult and supernatural forces, producing the half-divine legislators who figure mysteriously in the early history of nations. Hence he held, and with astonishing ingenuity enforced, the doctrine that nothing else could deliver Europe from the Satanic forces of revolution—he used the word Satanic in all literal seriousness—save the divinely inspired supremacy of the Pope. No natural operations seemed at all adequate either to produce or to maintain the marvel of a coherent society. We are reminded of a professor who, in the fantastic days of geology, explained the Pyramids of Egypt to be the remains of a volcanic eruption, which had forced its way upwards by a slow and stately motion; the hieroglyphs were crystalline formations; and the shaft of the great Pyramid was the air-hole of a volcano. De Maistre preferred a similar explanation of the monstrous structures of modern society. The hand of man could never have reared, and could never uphold them. If we cannot say that Burke laboured in constant travail with the same perplexity, it is at least true that he was keenly alive to it, and that one of the reasons why he dreaded to see a finger laid upon a single stone of a single political edifice, was his consciousness that he saw no answer to the perpetual enigma how any of these edifices had ever been built, and how the passion, violence, and waywardness of the natural man had ever been persuaded to bow their necks to the strong yoke of a

common social discipline. Never was mysticism more unseasonable; never was an hour when men needed more carefully to remember Burke's own wise practical precept, when he was talking about the British rule in India, that we must throw a sacred veil over the beginnings of government. Many woes might perhaps have been saved to Europe, if Burke had applied this maxim to the government of the new France.

Much has always been said about the inconsistency between Burke's enmity to the Revolution, and his enmity to Lord North in one set of circumstances, and to Warren Hastings in another. The pamphleteers of the day made selections from the speeches and tracts of his happier time, and the seeming contrast had its effect. More candid opponents admitted then, as all competent persons admit now, that the inconsistency was merely verbal and superficial. Watson, the Bishop of Llandaff, was only one of many who observed very early that this was the unmistakable temper of Burke's mind. "I admired, as everybody did," he said, "the talents, but not the principles of Mr. Burke; his opposition to the Clerical Petition [for relaxation of subscription, 1772], first excited my suspicion of his being a High-Churchman in religion, and a Tory, perhaps an aristocratic Tory, in the state." Burke had, indeed, never been anything else than a conservative. He was like Falkland, who had bitterly assailed Strafford and Finch on the same principles on which, after the outbreak of the civil war, he consented to be secretary of state to King Charles. Coleridge is borne out by a hundred passages, when he says that in Burke's writings at the beginning of the American Revolution, and in those at the beginning of the French Revolution, the principles are the same and the deductions are the same; the practical inferences are almost opposite in the one case from those drawn in the other, yet in both equally legitimate. It would be better to say that they would have been equally legitimate, if Burke had been as right in his facts, and as ample in his knowledge in the case of France, as he was in the case of America. We feel, indeed, that, partly from want of this knowledge, he has gone too far from some of the wise maxims of an earlier time. What has become of the doctrine that all great public collections of men—he was then speaking of the House of Commons—"possess a marked love of virtue and an abhorrence of vice." * Why was the French Assembly not to have the benefit of this admirable generalisation? What has become of all those sayings about the presumption, in all disputes between nations and rulers, "being at least upon a par in favour of the people;" and a populace never rebelling from passion for attack, but from impatience of suffering? And where is now that strong dictum, in the letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, that "general rebellions and revolts of a whole people never were *encouraged*, now or at any time; they are always *provoked*?"

When all these things have been noted, to hold a man to his

* *American Taxation.*

formulæ without reference to their special application, is pure pedantry. Burke was the last man to lay down any political proposition not subject to the ever varying interpretation of circumstances, and independently of the particular use which was to be made of it. Nothing universal, he had always said, can be rationally affirmed on any moral or political subject. The lines of morality, again, are never ideal lines of mathematics, but are broad and deep as well as long, admitting of exceptions, and demanding modifications. "These exceptions and modifications are made, not by the process of logic, but by the rules of prudence. Prudence is not only first in rank of the virtues, political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all. As no moral questions are even abstract questions, this, before I judge upon any abstract proposition, must be embodied in circumstances; for, since things are right and wrong, morally speaking, only by their relation and connection with other things, this very question of what it is politically right to grant, depends upon its relation to its effects." "Circumstances," he says, never weary of laying down his great notion of political method, "give, in reality, to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or obnoxious to mankind."

This is at once the weapon with which he would have defended his own consistency, and attacked the absolute proceedings in France. He changed his front, but he never changed his ground. He was not more passionate against the proscription in France than he had been against the suspension of Habeas Corpus in the American war. "I flatter myself," he said in the *Reflections*, "that I love a manly, moral, regulated liberty." Ten years before he had said, "The liberty, the only liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with order." The court tried to regulate liberty too severely. It found in him an inflexible opponent. Demagogues tried to remove the regulations of liberty. They encountered in him the bitterest and most unceasing of all remonstrants. The arbitrary majority in the House of Commons forgot for whose benefit they held power, from whom they derived their authority, and in what description of government it was that they had a place. Burke was the most valiant and strenuous champion in the ranks of the independent minority. He withstood to the face the King and the King's friends. He withstood to the face Charles Fox and the Friends of the People. He may have been wrong in both, or in either, but it is unreasonable to tell us that he turned back in his course; that he was a revolutionist in 1770, and a reactionist in 1790; that he was in his sane mind when he opposed the supremacy of the Court, but that his reason was tottering when he opposed the supremacy of the Faubourg Saint Antoine.

There is no part of Burke's career at which we may not find evidence of his instinctive and undying repugnance to the critical or revolutionary spirit and all its works. From the early days when he had parodied Bolingbroke, down to the later time when he

denounced Condorcet as a fanatical atheist, with "every disposition to the lowest as well as the highest and most determined villanies," he invariably suspected or denounced everybody, virtuous or vicious, high-minded or ignorble, who inquired with too keen a scrutiny into the foundations of morals, of religion, of social order. To examine with a curious or unfavourable eye the base of established opinions, was to show a leaning to anarchy, to atheism, or to unbridled libertinism. Already we have seen how, three years after the publication of his *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*, and seventeen years before the composition of the *Reflections*, he denounced the philosophers with a fervour and a vehemence which he never afterwards surpassed. When some of the clergy petitioned to be relieved from some of the severities of subscription, he had resisted them on the bold ground that the truth of a proposition deserves less attention than the effect of adherence to it upon the established order of things. "I will not enter into the question," he told the House of Commons, "how much truth is preferable to peace. Perhaps truth may be far better. But as we have scarcely ever the same certainty in the one that we have in the other, I would, unless the truth were evident indeed, hold fast to peace." In that intellectual restlessness, to which the world is so deeply indebted, Burke could recognise but scanty merit. Himself the most industrious and active-minded of men, he was ever sober in cutting the channels of his activity, and he would have had others equally moderate. Perceiving that plain and righteous conduct is the end of life in this world, he prayed men not to be over-curious in searching for, and handling, and again handling, the theoretic base on which the prerogatives of virtue repose. Provided that there was peace, that is to say, so much of fair happiness and content as is compatible with the conditions of the human lot, Burke felt that a too great inquisitiveness as to its foundations was not only idle but cruel.

If the world continues to read the *Reflections*, and reads it with a new admiration that is not diminished by the fact that on the special issue its tendency is every day more clearly discerned to have been misleading, we may be sure that it is not for the sake of such things as the precise character of the Revolution of 1688, where, for that matter, constitutional writers have shown abundantly that Burke was nearly as much in the wrong as Dr. Sacheverell. Nor has the book lived merely by its gorgeous rhetoric and high emotions, though these have been contributing elements. It lives because it contains a sentiment, a method, a set of informal principles, which, awakened into new life after the Revolution, rapidly transformed the current ways of thinking and feeling about all the most serious objects of our attention, and have powerfully helped to give a richer substance to all modern literature. In the *Reflections* we have the first great sign that the ideas on government and philosophy which Locke had been the chief agent in setting into European circulation, and which had carried all triumphantly before them throughout the century, did not comprehend the whole truth

nor the deepest truth about human character—the relations of men and the union of men in society. It has often been said that the armoury from which the French philosophers of the eighteenth century borrowed their weapons was furnished from England, and it may be added as truly that the reaction against that whole scheme of thought came from England. In one sense we may call the *Reflections* a political pamphlet, but it is much more than this, just as the movement against which it was levelled was much more than a political movement. The Revolution rested on a philosophy, and Burke confronted it with an antagonistic philosophy. Those are but superficial readers who fail to see at how many points Burke, while seeming only to deal with the French monarchy and the British constitution, with Dr. Price and Marie Antoinette, was, in fact, and exactly because he dealt with them in the comprehensive spirit of true philosophy, turning men's minds to an attitude from which not only the political incidents of the hour, but the current ideas about religion, psychology, the very nature of human knowledge, would all be seen in a changed light and clothed in new colour. All really profound speculation about society comes in time to touch the heart of every other object of speculation, not by directly contributing new truths or directly corroborating old ones, but by setting men to consider the consequences to life of different opinions on these abstract subjects, and their relations to the great paramount interests of society, however those interests may happen at the time to be conceived. Burke's book marks a turning-point in literary history, because it was the signal for that reaction over the whole field of thought, into which the Revolution drove many of the finest minds of the next generation, by showing the supposed consequences of pure individualistic rationalism.

We need not attempt to work out the details of this extension of a political reaction into a universal reaction in philosophy and poetry. Any one may easily think out for himself what consequences in act and thought, as well as in government, would be likely to flow, for example, from one of the most permanently admirable sides of Burke's teaching—his respect for the collective reason of men, and his sense of the impossiblity in politics and morals of considering the individual apart from the experience of the race. "We are afraid," he says, "to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that this stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. *Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them.* If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason: because prejudice with its reason has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it premanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady

course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, sceptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit, and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature." Is not this to say, in other words, that in every man the substantial foundations of action consist of the accumulated layers which various generations of ancestors have placed for him; that the greater part of our sentiments act most effectively when they act most mechanically, and by the methods of an unquestioned system; that although no rule of conduct or spring of action ought to endure which does not repose in sound reason, yet this naked reason is in itself a less effective means of influencing action than when it exists as one part of a fabric of ancient and endeared ascociation? Interpreted by a mobile genius and expanded by a poetic imagination, all this became the foundation from which the philosophy of Coleridge started, and, as Mill has shown in a famous essay, Coleridge was the great apostle of the conservative spirit in England in its best form.

Though Burke here, no doubt, found a true base for the philosophy of order, yet perhaps Condorcet or Barnave might have justly asked him whether, when we thus realise the strong and immovable foundations which are laid in our character before we are born, there could be any occasion, as a matter of fact, for that vehement alarm which moved Burke lest a few lawyers, by a score of parchment decrees, should overthrow the venerated sentiments of Europe about justice and about property? Should he not have known better than most men the force of the self-protecting elements of society.

This is not a convenient place for discussing the issues between the school of order and the school of progress. It is enough to have marked Burke's position in one of them. The *Reflectionns* places him among the great Conservatives of history. Perhaps the only Englishman with whom in this respect he may be compared is Sir Thomas More, that virtuous and eloquent reactionist of the sixteenth century. More abounded in light, in intellectual interest, in single-minded care for the common weal. He was as anxious as any man of his time for the improved ordering of the Church, but he could not endure that reformation should be bought at the price of breaking up the ancient spiritual unity of Europe. He was willing to slay and be slain rather than he would tolerate the destruction of the old faith, or assent to the violence of the new statecraft. He viewed Thomas Cromwell's policy of reformation just as Burke viewed Mirabeau's policy of revolution. Burke too, we may be very sure, would as willingly have sent Mirabeau and Bailly to prison or the block as More sent Philips to the Tower and Bainham to the stake. For neither More nor Burke was of the gentle contemplative spirit, which the first disorder of a new society just bursting into life merely overshadows with saddening regrets and poetic gloom. The old harmony was to them so bound up with the purpose and meaning of life, that to wage active battle

for the gods of their reverence was the irresistible instinct of self-perservation. More had no excuse which Burke had not, for the principle of persecution was accepted by the best minds of the sixteenth century, but by the best minds of the eighteenth it was emphatically repudiated.

Another illustrious name of Burke's own era rises to our lips, as we ponder mentally the too scanty list of those who have essayed the great and hardy task of reconciling order with progress. Turgot is even a more imposing figure than Burke himself. The impression made upon us by the pair is indeed very different, for Turgot was austere, reserved, distant, a man of many silences, and much suspense; while Burke, as we know, was imaginative, exuberant, unrestrained, and, like some of the greatest actors on the stage of human affairs, he had associated his own personality with the prevalence of right ideas and good influence. In Turgot, on the other hand, we discern something of the isolation, the sternness, the disdainful melancholy of Tacitus. He even rises out of the eager, bustling, shrill-tongued crowd of the Voltairean age with some of that austere moral indignation and haughty astonishment with which Dante had watched the stubborn ways of men centuries before. On one side Turgot shared the conservatism of Burke, though, perhaps, he would hardly have given it that name. He habitually corrected the headlong insistence of the revolutionary philosophers, his friends, by reminding them that neither pity, nor benevolence, nor hope can ever dispense with justice; and he could never endure to hear of great changes being wrought at the cost of this sovereign quality. Like Burke, he held fast to the doctrine that everything must be done for the multitude, but nothing by them. Like Burke, he realized how close are the links that bind the successive generations of men, and make up the long chain of human history. Like Burke, he never believed that the human mind has any spontaneous inclination to welcome pure truth. Here, however, is visible between them a hard line of division. It is not error, said Turgot, which opposes the progress of truth; it is indolence, obstinacy, and the spirit of routine. But then Turgot enjoined upon us to make it the aim of life to do battle in ourselves and others with all this indolence, obstinacy, and spirit of routine in the world; while Burke, on the contrary, gave to these bad things gentler names, he surrounded them with the picturesque associations of the past, and in the great world-crisis of his time he threw all his passion and all his genius on their side. Will any reader doubt which of these two types of the school of order and justice, both of them noble, is the more valuable for the race, and the worthier and more stimulating ideal for the individual?

It is not certain that Burke was not sometimes for a moment startled by the suspicion that he might unawares be fighting against the truth. In the midst of flaming and bitter pages, we now and again feel a cool breath from the distant region of a half-pensive tolerance. "I do not think," he says at the close of the *Reflections*, to the person to whom they were addressed, "that my sentiments

are likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought. You are young; you cannot guide, but must follow, the fortune of your country. But hereafter they may be of some use to you, in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly remain; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, 'through great varieties of untried being,' and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood."

He felt in the midst of his hate that what he took for seething chaos might after all be the struggle upwards of the germs of order. Among the later words that he wrote on the Revolution were these: "If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope, will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself than the mere designs of men." We can only regret that these rays of the *mens divinior* did not shine with a more steadfast light; and that a spirit which, amid the sharp press of manifold cares and distractions, had ever vibrated with lofty sympathies, was not now more constant to its faith in the beneficent powers and processes of the Unseen Time.

CHAPTER IX.

BURKE AND HIS PARTY — PROGRESS OF THE REVOLUTION—IRELAND—LAST YEARS.

For some months after the publication of the *Reflections*, Burke kept up the relations of an armed peace with his old political friends. The impeachment went on, and in December (1790) there was a private meeting on the business connected with it, between Pitt, Burke, Fox, and Dundas, at the house of the Speaker. It was described by one who knew as most snug and amiable, and there seems to have been a general impression in the world at this moment that Fox might by some means be induced to join Pitt. What troubled the slumbers of good Whigs like Gilbert Elliot was the prospect of Fox committing himself too strongly on French affairs. Burke himself was in the deepest dejection at the prospect; for Fox did not cease to express the most unqualified disapproval of the *Reflections*; he thought that, even in point of composition, it was the worst thing that Burke had ever published. It was already feared that his friendship for Sheridan was drawing him further away from Burke, with whom Sheridan had quarrelled, into a course of politics that would both damage his own reputation, and break up the strong union of which the Duke of Portland was the nominal head.

New floods in France had not yet carried back the ship of state into raging waters. Pitt was thinking so little of danger from that country, that he had plunged into a policy of intervention in the affairs of eastern Europe. When writers charge Burke with breaking violently in upon Pitt's system of peace abroad and reform at home, they overlook the fact that before Burke had begun to preach his crusade against the Jacobins, Pitt had already prepared a war with Russia. The nation refused to follow. They agreed with Fox that it was no concern of theirs whether or not Russia took from Turkey the country between the Boug and Dniester; they felt that British interests would be more damaged by the expenses of a war than by the acquisition by Russia of Ockzakow. Pitt was obliged to throw up the scheme, and to extricate himself as well as he could from rash engagements with Prussia. It was on account of his services to the cause of peace on this occasion that Catharine ordered the Russian ambassador to send her a bust of Fox in white marble, to be placed in her colon-

nade between Demosthenes and Cicero. We may take it for granted that after the Revolution rose to its full height, the bust of Fox accompanied that of Voltaire down to the cellar of the Hermitage.

While the affair of the Russian armament was still occupying the minister, an event of signal importance happened in the ranks of his political adversaries. The alliance which had lasted between Burke and Fox for five-and twenty years came to a sudden end, and this rift gradually widened into a destructive breach throughout the party. There is no parallel in our parliamentary history to the fatal scene. In Ireland, indeed, only eight years before, Flood and Grattan, after fighting side by side for many years, had all at once sprung upon one another in the Parliament House with the fury of vultures: Flood had screamed to Grattan that he was a mendicant patriot, and Grattan had called Flood an ill-omened bird of night, with a sepulchral note, a cadaverous aspect, and a broken beak. The Irish, like the French, have the art of making things dramatic, and Burke was the greatest of Irishmen. On the opening of the session of 1791, the government had introduced a bill for the better government of Canada. It introduced questions about church establishments and hereditary legislators. In discussing these, Fox made some references to France. It was impossible to refer to France without touching the *Reflections on the French Revolution.* Burke was not present, but he heard what Fox had said, and before long Fox again introduced French affairs in a debate on the Russian armament. Burke rose in violent heat of mind to reply, but the House would not hear him. He resolved to speak when the time came for the Canada Bill to be recommitted. Meanwhile some of his friends did all that they could to dissuade him from pressing the matter further. Even the Prince of Wales is said to have written him a letter. There were many signs of the rupture that was so soon to come in the Whig ranks. Men so equally devoted to the common cause as Windham and Elliot nearly came to a quarrel at a dinner-party at Lord Malmesbury's, on the subject of Burke's design to speak; and Windham, who for the present sided with Fox, enters in his diary that he was glad to escape from the room without speaking to the man whom, since the death of Dr. Johnson, he revered before all others.

On the day appointed for the Canada Bill, Fox called at Burke's house, and after some talk on Burke's intention to speak, and on other matters, they walked down to Westminster and entered the House together, as they had so many a time done before, but were never to do again. They found that the debate had been adjourned, and it was not until May 6th that Burke had an opportunity of explaining himself on the Revolution in France. He had no sooner risen, than interruptions broke out from his own side, and a scene of great disorder followed. Burke was incensed beyond endurance by this treatment, for even Fox and Windham had taken part in the tumult against him. With much bitterness he commented on Fox's previous eulogies of the Revolu-tion, and finally there came the

fatal words of severance. "It is indiscreet," he said, "at any period, but especially at my time of life, to provoke enemies, or give my friends occasion to desert me. Yet if my firm and steady adherence to the British Constitution place me in such a dilemma, I am ready to risk it, and with my last words to exclaim, 'Fly from the French Constitution.'" Fox at this point eagerly called to him that there was no loss of friends. "Yes, yes," cried Burke, "there is a loss of friends. I know the price of my conduct. I have done my duty at the price of my friend. Our friendship is at an end."

The members who sat on the same side were aghast at proceedings which went beyond their worst apprehensions. Even the ministerialists were shocked. Pitt agreed much more with Fox than with Burke, but he would have been more than human if he had not watched with complacency his two most formidable adversaries turning their swords against one another. Wilberforce, who was more disinterested, lamented the spectacle as shameful. In the galleries there was hardly a dry eye. Fox, as might have been expected from his warm and generous nature, was deeply moved, and is described as weeping even to sobbing. He repeated his former acknowledgment of his debt to Burke, and he repeated his former expression of faith in the blessings which the abolition of royal despotism would bring to France. With unabated vehemence Burke again rose to denounce the French Constitution—"a building composed of untempered mortar—the work of Goths and Vandals, where everything was disjointed and inverted." After a short rejoinder from Fox, the scene came to a close, and the once friendly intercourse between the two heroes was at an end. When they met in the Managers' box in Westminster Hall on the business of Hastings's trial, they met with the formalities of strangers. There is a story that when Burke left the House on the night of the quarrel it was raining, and Mr. Curwen, a member of the Opposition, took him home in his carriage. Burke at once began to declaim against the French. Curwen dropped some remark on the other side. "What!" Burke cried out, grasping the check-string, "are you one of these people! Set me down." It needed all Curwen's force to keep him where he was; and when they reached his house, Burke stepped out without saying a single word.

We may agree that all this did not indicate the perfect sobriety and self-control proper to a statesman, in what was a serious crisis both to his party and to Europe. It was about this time that Burke said to Addington, who was then Speaker of the House of Commons, that he was not well. "I eat too much, Speaker," he said, "I drink too much, and I sleep too little." It is even said that he felt the final breach with Fox as a relief from unendurable suspense; and he quoted the lines about Æneas, after he had finally resolved to quit Dido and the Carthaginian shore, at last being able to snatch slumber in his ship's tall stern. There can be no doubt how severe had been the tension. Yet the performance to which Burke now applied himself is one of the gravest and

most reasonable of all his compositions. He felt it necessary to vindicate the fundamental consistency between his present and his past. We have no difficulty in imagining the abuse to which he was exposed from those whose abuse gave him pain. In a country governed by party, a politician who quits the allies of a lifetime must expect to pay the penalty. The Whig papers told him that he was expected to surrender his seat in Parliament. They imputed to him all sorts of sinister motives. His name was introduced into ironical toasts. For a whole year there was scarcely a member of his former party who did not stand aloof from him. Windham, when the feeling was at its height, sent word to a host that he would rather not meet Burke at dinner. Dr. Parr, though he thought Mr. Burke the greatest man upon earth, declared himself most indignantly and most fixedly on the side of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox. The Duke of Portland, though always described as strongly and fondly attached to him, and Gilbert Elliot, who thought that Burke was right in his views on the Revolution, and right in expressing them, still could not forgive the open catastrophe, and for many months all the old habits of intimacy among them were entirely broken off.

Burke did not bend to the storm. He went down to Margate, and there finished the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*. Meanwhile he dispatched his son to Coblenz to give advice to the royalist exiles, who were then mainly in the hands of Calonne, one of the very worst of the ministers whom Louis XVI. had tried between his dismissal of Turgot in 1774, and the meeting of the States-General in 1789. This measure was taken at the request of Calonne, who had visited Burke at Margate. The English government did not disapprove of it, though they naturally declined to invest either young Burke or any one else with authority from themselves. As little came of the mission as might have been expected from the frivolous, unmanly, and enraged spirit of those to whom it was addressed.

In August (1791), while Richard Burke was at Coblenz the *Appeal* was published. This was the last piece that Burke wrote on the Revolution in which there is any pretence of measure, sobriety, and calm judgment in face of a formidable and perplexing crisis. Henceforth it is not political philosophy, but the minatory exhortation of a prophet. We deal no longer with principles and ideas, but with a partisan denunciation of particular acts, and a partisan incitement to a given practical policy. We may appreciate the policy as we choose, but our appreciation of Burke as a thinker and a contributor to political wisdom is at an end. He is now only Demosthenes thundering against Philip, or Cicero shrieking against Mark Antony.

The *Reflections* had not been published many months before Burke wrote the *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (January, 1791), in which strong disapproval had grown into furious hatred. It contains the elaborate diatribe against Rousseau, the grave panegyric on Cromwell for choosing Hale to be Chief Justice,

and a sound criticism on the laxity and want of foresight in the manner in which the States-General had been convened. Here first Burke advanced to the position that it might be the duty of other nations to interfere to restore the King to his rightful authority, just as England and Prussia had interfered to save Holland from confusion, as they had interfered to preserve the hereditary constitution in the Austrian Netherlands, and as Prussia had interfered to snatch even the malignant and the turban'd Turk from the pounce of the Russian eagle. Was not the King of France as much an object of policy and compassion as the Grand Seignior? As this was the first piece in which Burke hinted at a crusade, so it was the first in which he began to heap upon the heads, not of Hébert, Fouquier-Tinville, Billaud, nor even of Robespierre or Danton—for none of these had yet been heard of—but of able and conscientious men in the Constituent Assembly, language of a virulence which Fox once said seriously that Burke had picked, even to the phrases of it, out of the writings of Salmasius against Milton, but which is really only to be paralleled by the much worse language of Milton against Salmasius. It was in truth exactly the kind of incensed speech which, at a later date, the factions in Paris levelled against one another, when Girondins screamed for the heads of the Jacobins, and Robespierre denounced Danton, and Tallien cried for the blood of Robespierre.

Burke declined most wisely to suggest any plan for the National Assembly. "Permit me to say"—this is in the letter of January, 1791, to a member of the Assembly—"that if I were as confident as I ought to be diffident in my own loose general ideas, I never should venture to broach them, if but at twenty leagues' distance from the centre of your affairs. I must see with my own eyes; I must in a manner touch with my own hands, not only the fixed, but momentary circumstances, before I could venture to suggest any political project whatsoever. I must know the power and disposition to accept, to execute, to persevere. I must see all the aids and all the obstacles. I must see the means of correcting the plan, where correctives would be wanted. I must see the things: I must see the men. Without a concurrence and adaptation of these to the design, the very best speculative projects might become not only useless but mischievous. Plans must be made for men. People at a distance must judge ill of men. They do not always answer to their reputation when you approach them. Nay, the perspective varies, and shows them quite other than you thought them. At a distance, if we judge uncertainly of men, we must judge worse of *opportunities*, which continually vary their shapes and colours, and pass away like clouds." Our admiration at such words is quickly stifled when we recall the confident, unsparing, immoderate criticism which both preceded and followed this truly rational exposition of the danger of advising, in cases where we know neither the men nor the opportunities. Why was savage and unfaltering denunciation any less unbecoming than, as he admits, crude prescriptions would have been unbecoming?

By the end of 1791, when he wrote the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, he had penetrated still further into the essential character of the Revolution. Any notion of a reform to be effected after the decorous pattern of 1688, so conspicuous in the first great manifesto, had wholly disappeared. The changes in France he allowed to bear little resemblance or analogy to any of those which had been previously brought about in Europe. It is a revolution, he said, of doctrine and theoretic dogma. The Reformation was the last revolution of this sort which had happened in Europe; and he immediately goes on to remark a point of striking resemblance between them. The effect of the Reformation was "to introduce other interests into all countries than those which arose from their locality and natural circumstances." In like manner other sources of faction were now opened, combining parties among the inhabitants of different countries into a single connection. From these sources, effects were likely to arise fully as important as those which had formerly arisen from the jarring interests of the religious sects. It is a species of faction which "breaks the locality of public affections." *

He was thus launched on the full tide of his policy. The French Revolution must be hemmed in by a cordon of fire. Those who sympathised with it in England must be gagged, and if gagging did not suffice, they must be taught respect for the constitution in dungeons and on the gallows. His cry for war abroad and arbitrary tyranny at home waxed louder every day. As Fox said, it was lucky that Burke took the royal side in the Revolution, for his violence would certainly have got him hanged if he had happened to take the other side.

It was in the early summer of 1792 that Miss Burney again met Burke at Mrs. Crewe's villa at Hampstead. He entered into an animated conversation on Lord Macartney and the Chinese expedition, reviving all the old enthusiasm of his companion by his allusions and anecdotes, his brilliant fancies and wide information. When politics were introduced, he spoke with an eagerness and a vehemence that instantly banished the graces, though it redoubled the energies of his discourse. "How I wish," Miss Burney writes, "that you could meet this wonderful man when he is easy, happy, and with people he cordially likes. But politics, even on his own side, must always be excluded; his irritability is so terrible on that theme, that it gives immediately to his face *the expression of a man who is going to defend himself from murderers.*"

Burke still remained without a following, but the ranks of his old allies gradually began to show signs of wavering. His panic about the Jacobins within the gates slowly spread. His old faith,

* De Tocqueville has unconsciously imitated Burke's very phrases. Toutes les révolutions civiles et politiques ont eu une patrie, et s'y sont enfermées. La Révolution française . . . on l'a vue rapprocher ou diviser les hommes en dépit des lois, des traditions, des caractères, de langue, rendant parfois ennemis des compatriotes, et frères des étrangers; *ou plutôt elle a formé audessus de toutes les nationalités particulières, une patrie intellectuelle commune dont les hommes de toutes les nations ont pu devenir citoyens.*" —Ancien Régime, p. 15.

about which he had once talked so much, in the ancient rustic, manly, home-bred sense of the English people, he dismissed as if it had been some idle dream that had come to him through the ivory gate. His fine comparison of the nation to a majestic herd, browsing in peace amid the importunate chirrupings of a thousand crickets, became so little appropriate, that he was now beside himself with apprehension that the crickets were about to rend the oxen in pieces. Even then the herd stood tranquilly in their pastures, only occasionally turning a dull eye, now to France, and now to Burke. In the autumn of 1791, Burke dined with Pitt and Lord Grenville, and he found them resolute for an honest neutrality in the affairs of France, and "quite out of all apprehensions of any effect from the French Revolution in this kingdom, either at present or any time to come." Francis and Sheridan, it is true, spoke as if they almost wished for a domestic convulsion; and cool observers who saw him daily, even accused Sheridan of wishing to stir up the lower ranks of the people by the hope of plundering their betters. But men who afterwards became alarmists are found, so late as the spring of 1792, declaring in their most confidential correspondence that the party of confusion made no way with the country, and produced no effect. Horne Tooke was its most conspicuous chief, and nobody pretended to fear the subversion of the realm by Horne Tooke. Yet Burke, in letters where he admits that the democratic party is entirely discountenanced, and that the Jacobin faction in England is under a heavy cloud, was so possessed by the spectre of panic, as to declare that the Duke of Brunswick was as much fighting the battle of the crown of England as the Duke of Cumberland fought that battle at Culloden.

Time and events, meanwhile, had been powerfully telling for Burke. While he was writing his *Appeal*, the French King and Queen had destroyed whatever confidence sanguine dreamers might have had in their loyalty to the new order of things, by attempting to escape over the frontier. They were brought back, and a manful attempt was made to get the new constitution to work, in the winter of 1791-92. It was soon found out that Mirabeau had been right, when he said that for a monarchy it was too democratic, and for a republic there was a king too much. This was Burke's *Reflections* in a nutshell. But it was foreign intervention that finally ruined the King, and destroyed the hope of an orderly issue. Frederick the Great had set the first example of what some call iniquity and violence in Europe, and others in milder terms call a readjustment of the equilibrium of nations. He had taken Silesia from the House of Austria, and he had shared in the first partition of Poland. Catharine II. had followed him at the expense of Poland, Sweden, and Turkey. However we may view these transactions, and whether we describe them by the stern words of the moralist, or the more deprecatory words of the diplomatist, they are the first sources of that storm of lawless rapine which swept over every part of Europe for five-and-twenty years to come. The intervention of Austria and Prussia in the affairs of France was originally less a

deliberate design for the benefit of the old order than an interlude in the intrigues of eastern Europe. But the first effect of intervention on behalf of the French monarchy was to bring it in a few weeks to the ground.

In the spring of 1792 France replied to the preparations of Austria and Prussia for invasion by a declaration of war. It was inevitable that the French people should associate the court with the foreign enemy that was coming to its deliverance. Everybody knew as well then as we know it now, that the Queen was as bitterly incensed against the new order of things, and as resolutely unfaithful to it, as the most furious emigrant on the Rhine. Even Burke himself, writing to his son at Coblenz, was constrained to talk about Marie Antoinette as that "most unfortunate woman, who was not to be cured of the spirit of court intrigue even by a prison." The King may have been loyally resigned to his position, but resignation will not defend a country from the invader; and the nation distrusted a chief who only a few months before had been arrested in full flight to join the national enemy. Power naturally fell into the hands of the men of conviction, energy, passion, and resource. Patriotism and republicanism became synonymous, and the constitution against which Burke had prophesied was henceforth a dead letter. The spirit of insurrection that had slumbered since the fall of the Bastille and the march to Versailles in 1789, now awoke in formidable violence, and after the preliminary rehearsal of what is known in the revolutionary calendar as the 20th of June (1792), the people of Paris responded to the Duke of Brunswick's insensate manifesto by the more memorable day of the 10th of August. Brunswick, accepting the hateful language which the French emigrants put into his mouth, had declared that every member of the national guard taken with arms in his hands would be immediately put to death; that every inhabitant who should dare to defend himself, would be put to death and his house burnt to the ground; and that if the least insult was offered to the royal family, then their Austrian and Prussian majesties would deliver Paris to military execution and total destruction. This is the vindictive ferocity which only civil war can kindle. To convince men that the manifesto was not an empty threat, on the day of its publication a force of nearly 140,000 Austrians, Prussians, and Hessians entered France. The sections of Paris replied by marching to the Tuileries, and after a furious conflict with the Swiss guards, they stormed the chateau. The King and his family had fled to the National Assembly. The same evening they were thrown into prison, whence the King and Queen only came out on their way to the scaffold.

It was the King's execution in January, 1793, that finally raised feeling in England to the intense heat which Burke had for so long been craving. The evening on which the courier brought the news was never forgotten by those who were in London at the time. The play-houses were instantly closed, and the audiences insisted on retiring with half the amusement for which they had paid. People of the lowest and the highest rank alike put on mourning.

The French were universally denounced as fiends upon earth. It was hardly safe for a Frenchman to appear in the streets of London. Placards were posted on every wall, calling for war, and the crowds who gathered round them read them with loud hurrahs.

It would be a great mistake to say that Pitt ever lost his head, but he lost his feet. The momentary passion of the nation forced him out of the pacific path in which he would have chosen to stay. Burke had become the greatest power in the country, and was in closer communication with the ministers than any one out of office. He went once about this time with Windham and Elliot, to inform Pitt as to the uneasiness of the public about the slackness of our naval and military preparation. "Burke" says one of the party, "gave Pitt a little political instruction in a very respectful and cordial way, but with the authority of an old and most informed of statesman, and although nobody ever takes the whole of Burke's advice, yet he often, or always rather, furnishes very important and useful matter, some part of which sticks and does good. Pitt took it all very patiently and cordially."

It was in the December of 1792 that Burke had enacted that famous bit of melodrama out of place, known as the Dagger Scene. The Government had brought in an Alien Bill, imposing certain pains and restrictions on foreigners coming to this country. Fox denounced it as a concession to foolish alarms, and was followed by Burke, who began to storm as usual against murderous atheists. Then, without due preparation, he began to fumble in his bosom, suddenly drew out a dagger, and with an extravagant gesture threw it on the floor of the House, crying that this was what they had to expect from their alliance with France. The stroke missed its mark, and there was a general inclination to titter, until Burke, collecting himself for an effort, called upon them with a vehemence to which his listeners could not choose but respond, to keep French principles from their heads, and French daggers from their hearts; to preserve all their blandishments in life, and all their consolations in death; all the blessings of time, and all the hopes of eternity. All this was not prepared long beforehand, for it seems that the dagger had only been shown to Burke on his way to the House, as one that had been sent to Birmingham to be a pattern for a large order. Whether prepared or unprepared, the scene was one from which we gladly avert our eyes.

Negotiations had been going on for some months, and they continued in various stages for some months longer, for a coalition between the two great parties of the state. Burke was persistently anxious that Fox should join Pitt's government. Pitt always admitted the importance of Fox's abilities in the difficult affairs which lay before the ministry, and declared that he had no sort of personal animosity to Fox, but rather a personal good-will and good-liking. Fox himself said of a coalition, "It is so damned right, to be sure, that I cannot help thinking it must be." But the difficulties were insuperable. The more rapidly the government

drifted in Burke's direction, the more impossible was it for a man of Fox's political sympathies and convictions to have any dealings with a cabinet committed to a policy of irrational panic, to be carried out by a costly war abroad and cruel repression at home. "*What a very wretched man!*" was Burke's angry exclamation one day, when it became certain that Fox meant to stand by the old flag of freedom and generous common-sense.

When the coalition at length took place (1794), the only man who carried Burke's principles to their fullest extent into Pitt's cabinet was Windham. It is impossible not to feel the attraction of Windham's character, his amiability, his reverence for great and virtuous men, his passion for knowledge, the versatility of his interests. He is a striking example of the fact that literature was a common pursuit and occupation to the chief statesmen of that time (always excepting Pitt), to an extent that has been gradually tending to become rarer. Windham, in the midst of his devotion to public affairs, to the business of his country, and, let us add, a zealous attendance on every prize-fight within reach, was never happy unless he was working up points in literature and mathematics. There was a literary and classical spirit abroad, and in spite of the furious preoccupations of faction a certain ready disengagement of mind prevailed. If Windham and Fox began to talk of horses, they seemed to fall naturally into what had been said about horses by the old writers. Fox held that long ears were a merit, and Windham met him by the authority of Xenophon and Oppian in favour of short ones, and finally they went off into what it was that Virgil meant, when he called a horse's head *argutum caput*. Burke and Windham travelled in Scotland together in 1785, and their conversation fell as often on old books as on Hastings or on Pitt. They discussed Virgil's similes; Johnson and L'Estrange, as the extremes of English style; what Stephens and A. Gellius had to say about Cicero's use of the word *gratiosus*. If they came to libraries, Windham ran into them with eagerness, and very strongly enjoyed all "the *feel* that a library usually excites." He is constantly reproaching himself with a remissness, which was purely imaginary, in keeping up his mathematics, his Greek tragedies, his Latin historians. There is no more curious example of the remorse of a bookman impeded by affairs. "What progress might men make in the several parts of knowledge," he says very truly, in one of these moods, "if they could only pursue them with the same eagerness and assiduity as are exerted by lawyers in the conduct of a suit." But this distraction between the tastes of the bookman and the pursuits of public business, united with a certain quality of his constitution to produce one great defect in his character, and it was the worst defect that a statesman can have. He became the most irresolute and vacillating of men. He wastes the first half of a day in deciding which of two courses to take, and the second half in blaming himself for not having taken the other. He is constantly late at entertainments, because he cannot make up his mind in proper time whether to go or to stay at home; hesitation whether he shall

read in the red room or in the library, loses him three of the best hours of the morning; the difficulty of early rising he finds to consist less in rising early, than in satisfying himself that the practice is wholesome; his mind is torn for a whole forenoon in an absurd contest with himself, whether he ought to indulge a strong wish to exercise his horse before dinner. Every page of his diary is a register of the symptoms of this unhappy disease. When the Revolution came, he was absolutely forced by the iron necessity of the case, after certain perturbations to go either with Fox or with Burke. Under this compulsion he took one headlong plunge into the policy of alarm. Everybody knows how desperately an habitually irresolute man is capable of clinging to a policy or a conviction to which he has once been driven by dire stress of circumstance. Windham having at last made up his mind to be frightened by the Revolution, was more violently and inconsolably frightened than anybody else.

Pitt, after he had been forced into war, at least intended it to be a war on the good old-fashioned principles of seizing the enemy's colonies and keeping them. He was taunted by the alarmists with caring only for sugar islands, and making himself master of all the islands in the world except great Britain and Ireland. To Burke all this was an abomination, and Windham followed Burke to the letter. He even declared the holy rage of the *Fourth Letter on a Regicide Peace*, published after Burke's death, to contain the purest wisdom and the most unanswerable policy. It was through Windham's eloquence and perseverance that the monstrous idea of a crusade, and all Burke's other violent and excited precepts, gained an effective place and hearing in the cabinet, in the royal closet, and in the House of Commons, long after Burke himself had left the scene.

We have already seen how important an element Irish affairs become in the war with America. The same spirit which had been stirred by the American war was inevitably kindled in Ireland by the French Revolution. The association of United Irishmen now came into existence, with aims avowedly revolutionary: They joined the party which was striving for the relief of the Catholics from certain disabilities, and for their admission to the franchise. Burke had watched all movements in his native country, from the Whiteboy insurrection of 1761 downwards, with steady vigilance, and he watched the new movements of 1792 with the keenest eyes. It made him profoundly uneasy. He could not endure the thought of ever so momentary and indirect an association with a revolutionary party, either in Ireland or any other quarter of the globe, yet he was eager for a policy which should reconcile the Irish. He was so for two reasons. One of them was his political sense of the inexpediency of proscribing men by whole nations, and excluding from the franchise on the ground of religion a people as numerous as the subjects of the King of Denmark or the King of Sardinia, equal to the population of the United Netherlands, and larger than were to be found in all the States of Switzerland. His sec-

ond reason was his sense of the urgency of facing trouble abroad with a nation united and contented at home; of abolishing in the heart of the country that "bank of discontent, every hour accumulating, upon which every description of seditious men may draw at pleasure."

In the beginning of 1792, Burke's son went to Dublin as the agent and adviser of the Catholic Committee, who at first listened to him with the respect due to one in whom they expected to find the qualities of his father. They soon found out that he was utterly without either tact or judgment; that he was arrogant, impertinent, vain, and empty. Wolfe Tone declared him to be by far the most impudent and opinionative fellow that he had ever known in his life. Nothing could exceed the absurdity of his conduct, and on one occasion he had a very narrow escape of being taken into custody by the Serjeant-at-arms, for rushing down from the gallery into the Irish House of Commons, and attempting to make a speech in defence of a petition which he had drawn up, and which was being attacked by a member in his place. Richard Burke went home, it is said, with two thousand guineas in his pocket, which the Catholics had cheerfully paid as the price of getting rid of him. He returned shortly after, but only helped to plunge the business into further confusion, and finally left the scene covered with odium and discredit. His father's *Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe* (1792) remains an admirable monument of wise statesmanship, a singular interlude of calm and solid reasoning in the midst of a fiery whirlwind of intense passion. Burke perhaps felt that the state of Ireland was passing away from the sphere of calm and solid reason, when he knew that Dumouriez's victory over the allies at Valmy, which filled Beaconsfield with such gloom and dismay, was celebrated at Dublin by an illumination.

Burke, who was now in his sixty-fourth year, had for some time announced his intention of leaving the House of Commons, as soon as he had brought to an end the prosecution of Hastings. In 1794 the trial came to a close; the thanks of the House were formally voted to the managers of the impeachment; and when the scene was over, Burke applied for the Chiltern Hundreds. Lord Fitzwilliam nominated Richard Burke for the seat which his father had thus vacated at Malton. Pitt was then making arrangements for the accession of the Portland Whigs to his government, and it was natural, in connexion with these arrangements, to confer some favour on the man who had done more than anybody else to promote the new alliance. It was proposed to make Burke a peer under the style of Lord Beaconsfield—a title in a later age whimsically borrowed for himself by a man of genius, who delighted in irony. To the title it was proposed to attach a yearly income for two or more lives. But the bolt of destiny was at this instant launched. Richard Burke, the adored centre of all his father's hopes and affections, was seized with illness, and died (August, 1794). We cannot look without tragic emotion on the pathos of

the scene, which left the remnant of the old man's days desolate and void. A Roman poet has described in touching words the woe of the aged Nestor, as he beheld the funeral pile of his son, too untimely slain—

> "Oro parumper
> Attendas quantum de legibus ipse queratur
> Fatorum et nimio de stamine, quum videt acris
> Antilochi barbam ardentem: quum quærit ab omni
> Quisquis adest socius, cur hæc in tempora duret,
> Quod facinus dignum tam longo admiserit ævo."

Burke's grief finds a nobler expression. "The storm has gone over me, and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots and lie prostrate on the earth. . . .I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. . . . I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me have gone before me. They who should have been to me as posterity, are in the place of ancestors."

Burke only lived three years after this desolating blow. The arrangements for a peerage, as a matter of course, came to an end. But Pitt was well aware of the serious embarrassments by which Burke was so pressed that he saw actual beggary very close at hand. The King, too—who had once, by the way, granted a pension to Burke's detested Rousseau though Rousseau was too proud to draw it—seems to have been honourably interested in making a provision for Burke. What Pitt offered was an immediate grant of 1200*l.* a year from the Civil List for Mrs. Burke's life, to be followed by a proposition to Parliament in a message from the King, to confer an annuity of greater value upon a statesman who had served the country to his own loss for thirty years. As a matter of fact, the grant, 2500*l.* a year in amount, much to Burke's chagrin, was never brought before Parliament, but was conferred directly by the Crown, as a charge on a certain stock known as the West India four-and-a half per cents. It seems as if Pitt were afraid of challenging the opinion of Parliament; and the storm which the pension raised out of doors, was a measure of the trouble which the defence of it would have inflicted on the government inside the House of Commons. According to the rumour of the time, Burke sold two of his pensions upon lives for 27.000*l.*, and there was left the third pension of 1200*l.*, for his wife's life. By and by, when the resentment of the Opposition was roused to the highest pitch by the infamous Treason and Sedition Bills of 1795, the Duke of Bedford and Lord Lauderdale, seeking to accumulate every possible complaint against the government, assailed the grant to Burke, as made without the consent of Parliament, and as a violent contradiction to the whole policy of the plan for economic reform. The attack, if not unjustifiable in itself, came from an unlucky quarter. A chief of the house of Bedford was the most unfit person in the world to protest against grants by favour of the Crown. Burke was too prac-

tised a rhetorician not to see the opening, and his *Letter to a Noble Lord* is the most splendid repartee in the English language.

It is not surprising that Burke's defence should have provoked rejoinder. A cloud of pamphlets followed the *Letter to a Noble Lord*—some in doggrel verse, others in a magniloquent prose imitated from his own, others mere poisonous scurrility. The nearest approach to a just stroke that I can find, after turning over a pile of this trash, is an expression of wonder that he, who was inconsolable for the loss of a beloved son, should not have reflected how many tender parents had been made childless in the profusion of blood, of which he himself had been the most relentless champion. Our disgust at the pages of insult which were here levelled at a great man is perhaps moderated by the thought that Burke himself, who of all people ought to have known better, had held up to public scorn and obloquy men of such virtue, attainments, and real service to mankind as Richard Price and Joseph Priestley.

It was during these months that he composed the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, though the third and fourth of them were not published until after his death. There have been those to whom these compositions appeared to be Burke's masterpieces. In fact they are deplorable. They contain passages of fine philosophy and skilful and plausible reasoning, but such passages only make us wonder how they come to be where they are. The reader is in no humour for them. In splendour of rhetoric, in fine images, in sustention, in irony, they surpass anything that Burke ever wrote; but of the qualities and principles that, far more than his rhetoric, have made Burke so admirable and so great—of justice, of firm grasp of fact, of a reasonable sense of the probabilities of things—there are only traces enough to light up the gulfs of empty words, reckless phrases, and senseless vituperations, that surge and boil around them.

It is with the same emotion of "grief and shame" with which Fox heard Burke argue against relief to Dissenters, that we hear him abusing the courts of law because they did not convict Hardy and Horne Tooke. The pages against divorce and civil marriage, even granting that they point to the right judgment in these matters, express it with a vehemence that is irrational, and in the dialect, not of a statesman, but of an enraged Capucin. The highly-wrought passage in which Burke describes external aggrandisement as the original thought and the ultimate aim of the earlier statesmen of the Revolution, is no better than ingenious nonsense. The whole performance rests on a gross and inexcusable anachronism. There is a contemptuous refusal to discriminate between groups of men who were as different from one another as Oliver Cromwell was different from James Nayler, and between periods which were as unlike in all their conditions as the Athens of the Thirty Tyrants was unlike Athens after Thrasybulus had driven the Tyrants out. He assumes that the men, the policy, the maxims of the French government are the men, the policy, and the maxims of the handful of obscure miscreants who had hacked priests and

nobles to pieces at the doors of the prisons four years before. Carnot is to him merely "that sanguinary tyrant," and the heroic Hoche becomes "that old practised assassin," while the Prince of Wales, by the way, and the Duke of York are the hope and pride of nations. To heap up that incessant iteration about thieves, murderers, housebreakers, assassins, bandits, bravoes with their hands dripping with blood and their maw gorged with property, desperate paramours, bombastical players, the refuse and rejected offal of strolling theatres, bloody buffoons, bloody felons—all this was as unjust to hundreds of disinterested, honest, and patriotic men who were then earnestly striving to restore a true order and solid citizenship in France, as the foul-mouthed scurrility of an Irish Orangeman is unjust to millions of devout Catholics.

Burke was the man who might have been expected before all others to know that in every system of government, whatever may have been the crimes of its origin, there is sure, by the bare necessity of things, to rise up a party or an individual, whom their political instinct will force into resistance to the fatalities of anarchy. Man is too strongly a political animal for it to be otherwise. It was so at each period and division in the Revolution. There was always a party of order; and by 1796, when Burke penned these reckless philippics, order was only too easy in France. The Revolution had worn out the passion and moral enthusiasm of its first years, and all the best men of the revolutionary time had been consumed in a flame of fire. When Burke talked about this war being wholly unlike any war that ever was waged in Europe before, about its being a war for justice on the one side, and a fanatical bloody propagandism on the other, he shut his eyes to the plain fact that the Directory had after all really sunk to the moral level of Frederick and Catharine, or, for that matter, of Louis the Fourteenth himself. This war was only too like the other great wars of European history. The French government had become political, exactly in the same sense in which Thugut and Metternich and Herzberg were political. The French Republic in 1797 was neither more nor less aggressive, immoral, piratical, than the monarchies which had partitioned Poland, and had intended to redistribute the continent of Europe to suit their own ambitions. The Coalition began the game, but France proved too strong for them, and they had the worst of their game. Jacobinism may have inspired the original fire which made her armies irresistible, but Jacobinism of that stamp had now gone out of fashion, and to denounce a peace with the Directory because the origin of their government was regicidal, was as childish as it would have been in Mazarin to decline a treaty of regicide peace with Oliver Cromwell.

What makes the *Regicide Peace* so repulsive is not that it recommends energetic prosecution of the war, and not that it abounds in glaring fallacies in detail, but that it is in direct contradiction with that strong, positive, rational, and sane method which had before uniformly marked Burke's political philosophy. Here lay his inconsistency, not in abandoning democratic principles, for he

had never held them, but in forgetting his own rules, that nations act from adequate motives relative to their interests, and not from metaphysical speculation; that we cannot draw an indictment against a whole people, that there is a species of hostile justice which no asperity of war wholly extinguishes in the minds of a civilised people. "Steady independent minds," he had once said, "when they have an object of so serious a concern to mankind as *government* under their contemplation, will disdain to assume the part of satirists and declaimers." Show the thing that you ask for, he cried during the American war, to be reason, show it to be common-sense. We have a measure of the reason and common-sense of Burke's attitude in the *Regicide Peace*, in the language which it inspired in Windham and others, who denounce Wilberforce for canting when he spoke of peace; who stigmatised Pitt as weak, and a pander to national avarice for thinking of the cost of the war; and who actually charged the liverymen of London who petitioned for peace, with open sedition.

It is a striking illustration of the versatility of Burke's moods, that immediately before sitting down to write the flaming *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, he had composed one of the most lucid and accurately meditated of all his tracts, which, short as it is, contains ideas on free trade which was only too far in advance of the opinion of his time. In 1772 a Corn Bill had been introduced—it was passed in the following year—of which Adam Smith said, that it was like the laws of Solon, not the best in itself, but the best which the situation and tendency of the times would admit. In speaking upon this measure, Burke had laid down those sensible principles on the trade in corn, which he now in 1795 worked out in the *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*. Those who do not concern themselves with economics will perhaps be interested in the singular passage, vigorously objected to by Dugald Stewart, in which Burke sets up a genial defence of the consumption of ardent spirits. It is interesting as an argument, and it is most characteristic of the author.

The curtain was now falling. All who saw him, felt that Burke's life was quickly drawing to a close. His son's death had struck the final blow. We could only wish that the years had brought to him, what it ought to be the fervent prayer of us all to find at the close of the long struggle with ourselves and with circumstance—a disposition to happiness, a composed spirit to which time has made things clear, an unrebellious temper, and hopes undimmed for mankind. If this was not so, Burke at least busied himself to the end in great interests. His charity to the unfortunate emigrants from France was diligent and unwearied. Among other solid services, he established a school at Beaconsfield for sixty French boys, principally the orphans of Quiberon, and the children of other emigrants who had suffered in the cause. Almost the last glimpse that we have of Burke is in a record of a visit to Beaconsfield by the author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*. Mackintosh had written to Burke to express his admiration for his character and

genius, and recanting his old defence of the Revolution. "Since that time," he said, "a melancholy experience has undeceived me on many subjects, in which I was than the dupe of my enthusiasm." When Mackintosh went to Beaconsfield (Christmas, 1797), he was as much amazed as every one else with the exuberance of his host's mind in conversation. Even then Burke entered with cordial glee into the sports of children, rolling about with them on the carpet, and pouring out in his gambols the sublimest images, mixed with the most wretched puns. He said of Fox, with a deep sigh, "He is made to be loved." There was the irresistible outbreak against "that putrid carcase, that mother of all evil—the French Revolution." It reminded him of the accursed things that crawled in and out of the mouth of the vile hag in Spenser's Cave of Error; and he repeated the nauseous stanza. Mackintosh was to be the faithful knight of the romance, the brightness of whose sword was to flash destruction on the filthy progeny.

It was on the 9th of July, 1797, that in the sixty-eighth year of his age, preserving his faculties to the last moment, he expired. With magnanimous tenderness, Fox proposed that he should be buried among the great dead in Westminster Abbey; but Burke had left strict injunctions that his funeral should be private, and he was laid in the little church at Beaconsfield. It was a terrible moment in the history of England and of Europe. An open mutiny had just been quelled in the fleet. There had been signs of disaffection in the army. In Ireland the spirit of revolt was smouldering, which in a few months broke out in the fierce flames of a great rebellion. And it was the year of the political crime of Campo Formio, that sinister pacification in which violence and fraud once more asserted their unveiled ascendancy in Europe. These sombre shadows were falling over the western world, when a life went out, which, notwithstanding some grave aberrations, had made great strides in human destiny very luminous.

CHAPTER X.

BURKE'S LITERARY CHARACTER.

A STORY is told that in the time when Burke was still at peace with the Dissenters, he visited Priestley, and after seeing his library and his laboratory, and hearing how his host's hours were given to experiment and meditation, he exclaimed that such a life must make him the happiest and most to be envied of men. It must sometimes have occurred to Burke to wonder whether he had made the right choice when he locked away the fragments of his history, and plunged into the torment of party and Parliament. But his interests and aptitudes were too strong and overmastering for him to have been right in doing otherwise. Contact with affairs was an indispensable condition for the full use of his great faculties, in spite of their being less faculties of affairs than of speculation. Public life was the actual field in which to test, and work out, and use with good effect the moral ideas which were Burke's most sincere and genuine interests. And he was able to bring these moral ideas into such effective use because he was so entirely unfettered by the narrowing spirit of formula. No man, for instance, who thought in formulæ would have written the curious passage that I have already referred to, in which he eulogises gin, because "under the pressure of the cares and sorrows of our mortal condition, men have at all times and in all countries called in some physical aid to their moral consolation." He valued words at their proper rate; that is to say, he knew that some of the greatest facts in the life and character of man, and in the institutions of society, can find no description and no measurement in words. Public life, as we can easily perceive, with its shibboleths, its exclusive parties, its measurement by conventional standards, its attention to small expediencies before the larger ones, is not a field where such characteristics are likely to make an instant effect.

Though it is not wrong to say of Burke that, as an orator, he was transcendent, yet in that immediate influence upon his hearers which is commonly supposed to be the mark of oratorical success, all the evidence is that Burke generally failed. We have seen how his speech against Hastings affected Miss Burney, and how the speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts was judged by Pitt not to be worth answering. Perhaps the greatest that he ever made was that on conciliation with America; the wisest in its temper, the

most closely logical in its reasoning, the amplest in appropriate topics, the most generous and conciliatory in the substance of its appeals. Yet Erskine, who was in the House when this was delivered, said that it drove everybody away, including people who, when they came to read it, read it over and over again, and could hardly think of anything else. As Moore says rather too floridly, but with truth—"In vain did Burke's genius put forth its superb plumage, glittering all over with the hundred eyes of fancy—the gait of the bird was heavy and awkward, and its voice seemed rather to scare than attract." Burke's gestures were clumsy; he had sonorous but harsh tones; he never lost a strong Irish accent; and his utterance was often hurried and eager. Apart from these disadvantages of accident which have been overcome by men infinitely inferior to Burke, it is easy to perceive, from the matter and texture of the speeches that have become English classics, that the very qualities which are excellences in literature were drawbacks to the spoken discourses. A listener in Westminster Hall or the House of Commons, unlike the reader by his fireside in the next century, is always thinking of arguments and facts that bear directly on the special issue before him. What he wishes to hear is some particularity of event or inference which will either help him to make up his mind, or will justify him if his mind is already made up. Burke never neglected these particularities, and he never went so wide as to fall for an instant into vagueness, but he went wide enough into the generalities that lent force and light to his view, to weary men who cared for nothing, and could not be expected to care for anything, but the business actually in hand and the most expeditious way through it. The contentiousness is not close enough and rapid enough to hold the interest of a practical assembly, which, though it was a hundred times less busy than the House of Commons to-day, seems to have been eager in the inverse proportion of what it had to do, to get that little quickly done.

Then we may doubt whether there is any instance of an orator throwing his spell over a large audience, without frequent resort to the higher forms of commonplace. Two of the greatest speeches of Burke's time are supposed to have been Grattan's on Tithes and Fox's on the Westminster Scrutiny, and these were evidently full of the splendid commonplaces of the first-rate rhetorician. Burke's mind was not readily set to these tunes. The emotion to which he commonly appealed was that too rare one, the love of wisdom; and he combined his thoughts and knowledge in propositions of wisdom so weighty and strong, that the minds of ordinary hearers were not on the instant prepared for them.

It is true that Burke's speeches were not without effect of an indirect kind, for there is good evidence that at the time when Lord North's ministry was tottering, Burke had risen to a position of the first eminence in Parliament. When Boswell said to him that people would wonder how he could bring himself to take so much pains with his speeches, knowing with certainty that not one

vote would be gained by them, Burke answered that it is very well worth while to take pains to speak well in Parliament; for if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion; and though an Act that has been ably opposed becomes law, yet in its progress it is softened and modified to meet objections whose force has never been acknowledged directly. "Aye, sir," Johnson broke in, "and there is a gratification of pride. Though we cannot out-vote them, we wil out-argue them."

Out-arguing is not perhaps the right word for most of Burke's performances. He is at heart thinking more of the subject itself than of those on whom it was his apparent business to empress a particular view of it. He surrenders himself wholly to the matter, and follows up, though with a strong and close tread, all the excursions to which it may give rise in an elastic intelligence—"motion," as De Quincey says, "propagating mation, and life throwing off life." But then this exuberant way of thinking, this willingness to let the subject lead, is less apt in public discourse than it is in literature, and from this comes the literary quality of Burke's speeches.

With all his hatred for the book-man in politics, Burke owed much of his own distinction to that generous richness and breadth of judgment which had been ripened in him by literature and his practice in it. Like some other men in our history, he showed that books are a better preparation for statesmanship than early training in the subordinate posts and among the permanent officials of a public department. There is no copiousness of literary reference in his works, such as over-abounded in civil and ecclesiastical publicists of the seventeenth century. Nor can we truly say that there is much, though there is certainly some, of that tact which literature is alleged to confer on those who approach it in a just spirit and with the true gift. The influence of literature on Burke lay partly in the direction of emancipation from the mechanical formulæ of practical politics; partly in the association which it engendered, in a powerful understanding like his, between politics and the moral forces of the world, and between political maxims and the old and great sentences of morals; partly in drawing him, even when resting his case on prudence and expediency, to appeal to the widest and highest sympathies; partly, and more than all, in opening his thoughts to the many conditions, possibilities, and "varieties of untried being" in human character and situation, and so giving an incomparable flexibility to his methods of political approach.

This flexibility is not to be found in his manner and composition. That derives its immense power from other sources; from passion, intensity, imagination, size, truth, cogency of logical reason. If any one has imbued himself with that exacting love of delicacy, measure, and taste in expression, which was until our own day a sacred tradition of the French, then he will not like Burke. Those who insist on charm, on winningness in style, on subtle harmonies

and exquisite suggestion, are disappointed in Burke; they even find him stiff and over-coloured. And there are blemishes of this kind. His banter is nearly always ungainly, his wit blunt, as Johnson said of it, and very often unseasonable. We feel that Johnson must have been right in declaring that though Burke was always in search of pleasantries, he never made a good joke in his life. As is usual with a man who has not true humour, Burke is also without true pathos. The thought of wrong or misery moved him less to pity for the victim than to anger against the cause. Again, there are some gratuitous and unredeemed vulgarities; some images whose barbarity makes us shudder, of creeping ascarides and inexpugnable tape-worms. But it is the mere foppery of literature to suffer ourselves to be long detained by specks like these.

The varieties of Burke's literary or rhetorical method are very striking. It is almost incredible that the superb imaginative amplification of the description of Hyder Ali's descent upon the Carnatic should be from the same pen as the grave, simple, unadorned *Address to the King* (1777), where each sentence falls on the ear with the accent of some golden-tongued oracle of the wise gods. His stride is the stride of a giant, from the sentimental beauty of the picture of Marie Antoinette at Versailles, or the red horror of the tale of Debi Sing in Rungpore, to the learning, positiveness, and cool judicial mastery of the *Report on the Lords' Journals* (1794), which Philip Francis, no mean judge, declared on the whole to be the "most eminent and extraordinary" of all his productions. Even in the coolest and dryest of his pieces there is the mark of greatness, of grasp, of comprehension. In all its varieties Burke's style is noble, earnest, deep-flowing, because his sentiment was lofty and fervid, and went with sincerity and ardent disciplined travail of judgment. Fox told Francis Horner that Dryden's prose was Burke's great favorite, and that Burke imitated him more than anyone else. We may well believe that he was attracted by Dryden's ease, his copiousness, his gaiety, his manliness of style, but there can hardly have been any conscious attempt at imitation. Their topics were too different. Burke had the style of his subjects, the amplitude, the weightiness, the laboriousness, the sense, the high flight, the grandeur, proper to a man dealing with imperial themes, the freedom of nations, the justice of rulers, the fortunes of great societies, the sacredness of law. Burke will always be read with delight and edification, because in the midst of discussions on the local and the accidental, he scatters apophthegms that take us into the regions of lasting wisdom. In the midst of the torrent of his most strenuous and passionate deliverances, he suddenly rises aloof from his immediate subject, and in all tranquillity reminds us of some permanent relation of things, some enduring truth of human life or society. We do not hear the organ tones of Milton, for faith and freedom had other notes in the seventeenth century. There is none of the complacent and wise-browed sagacity of Bacon, for Burke's were days of eager personal strife and party fire and civil division. We are not exhilarated by the cheerfulness,

the polish, the fine manners of Bolingbroke, for Burke had an anxious conscience, and was earnest and intent that the good should triumph. And yet Burke is among the greatest of those who have wrought marvels in the prose of our English tongue.

The influence of Burke on the publicists of the generation after the Revolution was much less considerable than might have been expected. In Germany, where there has been so much excellent writing about *Staatswissenschaft*, with such poverty and darkness in the wisdom of practical politics, there is a long list of writers who have drawn their inspiration from Burke. In France, publicists of the sentimental school, like Chateaubriand, and the politico-ecclesiastical school, like De Maistre, fashioned a track of their own. In England Burke made a deep mark on contemporary opinion during the last years of his life, and then his influence underwent a certain eclipse. The official Whigs considered him a renegade and a heresiarch, who had committed the deadly sin of breaking up the party, and they never mentioned his name without bitterness. To men like Godwin, the author of *Political Justice*, Burke was as antichrist. Bentham and James Mill thought of him as a declaimer who lived upon applause, and who, as one of them says, was for protecting everything old, not because it was good but because it existed. In one quarter only did he exert a profound influence. His maxim that men might employ their sagacity in discovering the latent wisdom which underlies general prejudices and old institutions, instead of exploding them, inspired Coleridge, as I have already said; and the Coleridgian school are Burke's direct descendants, whenever they deal with the significance and the relations of Church and State. But they connected these views so closely with their views in metaphysics and theology, that the association with Burke was effectually disguised.

The only English writer of that age whom we can name along with Burke in the literature of enduring power, is Wordsworth, that great representative in another and a higher field, and with many rare elements added that were all his own, of those harmonising and conciliatory forces and ideas that make man's destiny easier to him through piety in its oldest and best sense; through reverence for the past, for duty, for institutions. He was born in the year of the *Present Discontents* (1770); and when Burke wrote the *Reflections*, Wordsworth was standing, with France "on the top of golden hours," listening with delight among the ruins of the Bastille, or on the banks of the Loire, to "the homeless sound of joy that was in the sky." When France lost faith and freedom, and Napoleon had built his throne on their grave, he began to see those strong elements which for Burke had all his life been the true and fast foundation of the social world. Wide as is the difference between an oratorical and a declamatory mind like Burke's, and the least oratorical of all poets, yet, under this difference of form and temper, there is a striking likeness in spirit. There was the same energetic feeling about moral ideas, the same frame of counsel and prudence, the same love for the slowness of time, the

same slight account held of mere intellectual knowledge, and even the same ruling sympathy with that side of the character of Englishmen which Burke exulted in, as "*their awe of kings and reverence for priests*," "*their sullen resistance of innovation*," "*their unalterable perseverance in the wisdom of prejudice*."

The conservative movement in England ran on for many years in the ecclesiastical channel, rather than among questions where Burke's writings might have been brought to bear. On the political side the most active minds, both in practice and theory, worked out the principles of liberalism, and they did so on a plan and by methods from which Burke's utilitarian liberalism and his historic conservatism were equally remote. There are many signs around us that this epoch is for the moment at an end. The historic method, fitting in with certain dominant conceptions in the region of natural science, is bringing men round to a way of looking at society for which Burke's maxims are exactly suited; and it seems probable that he will be more frequently and more seriously referred to within the next twenty years than he has been within the whole of the last eighty.

BUNYAN

BY

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

EARLY LIFE 7

CHAPTER II.

CONVICTION OF SIN 16

CHAPTER III.

"GRACE ABOUNDING" 27

CHAPTER IV.

CALL TO THE MINISTRY 37

CHAPTER V.

ARREST AND TRIAL 45

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEDFORD GAOL 52

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE.

LIFE AND DEATH OF MR. BADMAN 59

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE HOLY WAR" 73

CHAPTER IX.

"THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS" 95

CHAPTER X.

LAST DAYS AND DEATH 108

BUNYAN

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

"I WAS of a low and inconsiderable generation, my father's house being of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all families in the land." "I never went to school, to Aristotle or Plato, but was brought up in my father's house in a very mean condition, among a company of poor countrymen." "Nevertheless, I bless God that by this door He brought me into the world to partake of the grace and life that is by Christ in His Gospel." This is the account given of himself and his origin by a man whose writings have for two centuries affected the spiritual opinions of the English race in every part of the world more powerfully than any book or books, except the Bible.

John Bunyan was born at Elstow, a village near Bedford, in the year 1628. It was a memorable epoch in English history, for in that year the House of Commons extorted the consent of Charles I. to the Petition of Right. The stir of politics, however, did not reach the humble household into which the little boy was introduced. His father was hardly occupied in earning bread for his wife and children as a mender of pots and kettles: a tinker—working in neighbors' houses or at home, at such business as might be brought to him. "The Bunyans," says a friend, "were of the national religion, as men of that calling commonly were." Bunyan himself, in a passage which has been always understood to refer to his father, describes him "as an honest, poor labouring man, who, like Adam unparadised, had all the world to get his bread in, and was very careful to maintain his family." In those days there were no village schools in England; the education of the poor was an apprenticeship to agriculture or handicraft; their religion they learned at home or in church. Young Bunyan was more fortunate. In Bedford there was a grammar school, which had been founded in Queen Mary's time by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir William Harper. Hither, when he was old enough to walk to and fro, over the mile of road between Elstow and Bedford, the child was sent,

if not to learn Aristotle and Plato, to learn at least "to read and write according to the rate of other poor men's children."

If religion was not taught at school, it was taught with some care in the cottages and farmhouses by parents and masters. It was common in many parts of England, as late as the end of the last century, for the farmers to gather their apprentices about them on Sunday afternoons, and to teach them the Catechism. Rude as was Bunyan's home, religious notions of some kind had been early and vividly impressed upon him. He caught, indeed, the ordinary habits of the boys among whom he was thrown. He learnt to use bad language, and he often lied. When a child's imagination is exceptionally active, the temptations to untruth are correspondingly powerful. The inventive faculty has its dangers, and Bunyan was eminently gifted in that way. He was a violent, passionate boy besides, and thus he says of himself that for lying and swearing he had no equal, and that his parents did not sufficiently correct him. Wickedness, he declares in his own remorseful story of his early years, became a second nature to him. But the estimate which a man forms of himself in later life, if he has arrived at any strong abhorrence of moral evil, is harsher than others at the time would have been likely to have formed. Even then the poor child's conscience must have been curiously sensitive, and it revenged itself upon him in singular tortures.

"My sins," he says, "did so offend the Lord that even in my childhood He did scare and affright me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with dreadful visions. I have been in my bed greatly afflicted while asleep, with apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid. I was afflicted with thoughts of the Day of Judgment night and day, trembling at the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell fire." When, at ten years old, he was running about with his companions in "his sports and childish vanities," these terrors continually recurred to him, yet, "he would not let go his sins."

Such a boy required rather to be encouraged than checked in seeking innocent amusements. Swearing and lying were definite faults which ought to have been corrected; but his parents, perhaps, saw that there was something unusual in the child. To them he probably appeared not worse than other boys, but considerably better. They may have thought it more likely that he would conquer his own bad inclinations by his own efforts, than that they could mend him by rough rebukes.

When he left school he would naturally have been bound apprentice, but his father brought him up at his own trade. Thus he lived at home, and grew to manhood there, forming his ideas of men and things out of such opportunities as the Elstow neighbourhood afforded.

From the time when the Reformation brought them a translation of it, the Bible was the book most read—it was often the only book which was read—in humble English homes. Familiarity

with the words had not yet trampled the sacred writings into practical barrenness. No doubts or questions had yet risen about the Bible's nature or origin. It was received as the authentic word of God Himself. The Old and New Testament alike represented the world as the scene of a struggle between good and evil spirits; and thus every ordinary incident of daily life was an instance or illustration of God's providence. This was the universal popular belief, not admitted only by the intellect, but accepted and realised by the imagination. No one questioned it, save a few speculative philosophers in their closets. The statesman in the House of Commons, the judge on the Bench, the peasant in a midland village, interpreted literally by this rule the phenomena which they experienced or saw. They not only believed that God had miraculously governed the Israelites, but they believed that as directly and immediately He governed England in the seventeenth century. They not only believed that there had been a witch at Endor, but they believed that there were witches in their own villages, who had made compact with the devil himself. They believed that the devil still literally walked the earth like a roaring lion; that he and the evil angels were perpetually labouring to destroy the souls of men; and that God was equally busy overthrowing the devil's work, and bringing sin and crimes to eventual punishment.

In this light the common events of life were actually looked at and understood, and the air was filled with anecdotes so told as to illustrate the belief. These stories and these experiences were Bunyan's early mental food. One of them, which had deeply impressed the imagination of the Midland counties, was the story of "Old Tod." This man came one day into court, in the Summer Assizes at Bedford, "all in a dung sweat," to demand justice upon himself as a felon. No one had accused him, but God's judgment was not to be escaped, and he was forced to accuse himself. "My Lord," said Old Tod to the judge, "I have been a thief from my childhood. I have been a thief ever since. There has not been a robbery committed these many years, within so many miles of this town, but I have been privy to it." The judge, after a conference, agreed to indict him of certain felonies which he had acknowledged. He pleaded guilty, implicating his wife along with him, and they were both hanged.

An intense belief in the moral government of the world creates what it insists upon. Horror at sin forces the sinner to confess it, and makes others eager to punish it. "God's revenge against murder and adultery" becomes thus an actual fact, and justifies the conviction in which it rises. Bunyan was specially attentive to accounts of judgments upon swearing, to which he was himself addicted. He tells a story of a man at Wimbledon, who, after uttering some strange blasphemy, was struck with sickness, and died cursing. Another such scene he probably witnessed himself,* and never forgot. An alehouse-keeper in the neighbourhood of

* The story is told by Mr. Attentive in the *Life of Mr. Badman*: but it is almost certain that Bunyan was relating his own experience.

Elstow had a son who was half-witted. The favourite amusement, when a party was collected drinking, was for the father to provoke the lad's temper, and for the lad to curse his father and wish the devil had him. The devil at last did have the alehouse-keeper, and rent and tore him till he died. "I," says Bunyan, "was an eye and ear witness of what I here say. I have heard Ned in his roguery cursing his father, and his father laughing thereat most heartily, still provoking of Ned to curse that his mirth might be increased. I saw his father also when he was possessed. I saw him in one of his fits, and saw his flesh as it was thought gathered up in a heap about the bigness of half an egg, to the unutterable torture and affliction of the old man. There was also one Freeman, who was more than an ordinary doctor, sent for to cast out the devil, and I was there when he attempted to do it. The manner whereof was this. They had the possessed in an outroom, and laid him upon his belly upon a form, with his head hanging down over the form's end. Then they bound him down thereto; which done, they set a pan of coals under his mouth, and put something therein which made a great smoke—by this means, as it was said, to fetch out the devil. There they kept the man till he was almost smothered in the smoke, but no devil came out of him, at which Freeman was somewhat abashed, the man greatly afflicted, and I made to go away wondering and fearing. In a little time, therefore, that which possessed the man carried him out of the world, according to the cursed wishes of his son."

The wretched alehouse-keeper's life was probably sacrificed in this attempt to dispossess the devil. But the incident would naturally leave its mark on the mind of an impressionable boy. Bunyan ceased to frequent such places after he began to lead a religious life. The story, therefore, most likely belongs to the experiences of his first youth after he left school; and there may have been many more of a similar kind, for, except that he was steady at his trade, he grew up a wild lad, the ringleader of the village apprentices in all manner of mischief. He had no books, except a life of Sir Bevis of Southampton, which would not tend to sober him: indeed, he soon forgot all that he had learnt at school, and took to amusements and doubtful adventures, orchard-robbing, perhaps, or poaching, since he hints that he might have brought himself within the reach of the law. In the most passionate language of self-abhorrence, he accuses himself of all manner of sins, yet it is improbable that he appeared to others what in later life he appeared to himself. He judged his own conduct as he believed that it was regarded by his Maker, by whom he supposed eternal torment to have been assigned as the just retribution for the lightest offence. Yet he was never drunk. He who never forgot anything with which he could charge himself, would not have passed over drunkenness, if he could remember that he had been guilty of it; and he distinctly asserts, also, that he was never in a single instance unchaste. In our days, a rough tinker who could say as much for himself after he had grown to manhood would be regarded as a

model of self-restraint. If, in Bedford and the neighbourhood, there was no young man more vicious than Bunyan, the moral standard of an English town in the seventeenth century must have been higher than believers in Progress will be pleased to allow.

He declares that he was without God in the world, and in the sense which he afterwards attached to the word this was probably true. But serious thoughts seldom ceased to work in him. Dreams only reproduce the forms and feelings with which the waking imagination is most engaged. Bunyan's rest continued to be haunted with the phantoms which had terrified him when a child. He started in his sleep, and frightened the family with his cries. He saw evil spirits in monstrous shapes, and fiends blowing flames out of their nostrils. "Once," says a biographer, who knew him well, and had heard the story of his visions from his own lips, "he dreamed that he saw the face of heaven as it were on fire, the firmament crackling and shivering with the noise of mighty thunder, and an archangel flew in the midst of heaven, sounding a trumpet, and a glorious throne was seated in the east, whereon sat One in brightness like the morning star. Upon which he, thinking it was the end of the world, fell upon his knees and said, 'Oh, Lord, have mercy on me! What shall I do? The Day of Judgment is come, and I am not prepared.'"

At another time "he dreamed that he was in a pleasant place jovial and rioting, when an earthquake rent the earth, out of which came bloody flames, and the figures of men tossed up in globes of fire, and falling down again with horrible cries and shrieks and execrations, while devils mingled among them and laughed aloud at their torments. As he stood trembling, the earth sank under him, and a circle of flames embraced him. But when he fancied he was at the point to perish, One in shining white raiment descended and plucked him out of that dreadful place, while the devils cried after him to take him to the punishment which his sins had deserved. Yet he escaped the danger, and leapt for joy when he awoke and found it was a dream."

Mr. Southey, who thinks wisely that Bunyan's biographers have exaggerated his early faults, considers that at worst he was a sort of "blackguard." This, too, is a wrong word. Young village blackguards do not dream of archangels flying through the midst of heaven, nor were these imaginations invented afterwards, or rhetorically exaggerated. Bunyan was undoubtedly given to story-telling as a boy, and the recollection of it made him peculiarly scrupulous in his statements in later life. One trait he mentions of himself which no one would have thought of who had not experienced the feeling, yet every person can understand it and sympathise with it. These spectres and hobgoblins drove him wild. He says, "I was so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that I should often wish either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil; supposing that they were only tormentors, and that, if it must needs be that I went thither, I might be rather a tormentor than tormented myself."

The visions at last ceased. God left him to himself, as he puts it, and gave him over to his own wicked inclinations. He fell, he says, into all kinds of vice and ungodliness without further check. The expression is very strong, yet when we look for particulars we can find only that he was fond of games which Puritan preciseness disapproved. He had high animal spirits, and engaged in lawless enterprises. Once or twice he nearly lost his life. He is sparing of details of his outward history, for he regarded it as nothing but vanity; but his escapes from death were providences, and therefore he mentions them. He must have gone to the coast somewhere, for he was once almost drowned in a creek of the sea. He fell out of a boat into the river at another time, and it seems that he could not swim. Afterwards he seized hold of an adder, and was not bitten by it. These mercies were sent as warnings, but he says that he was too careless to profit by them. He thought that he had forgotten God altogether, and yet it is plain that he had not forgotten. A bad young man, who has shaken off religion because it is a restraint, observes with malicious amusement the faults of persons who make a profession of religion. He infers that they do not really believe it, and only differ from their neighbours in being hypocrites. Bunyan notes this disposition in his own history of Mr. Badman. Of himself he says: "Though I could sin with delight and ease, and take pleasure in the villanies of my companions, even then, if I saw wicked things done by them that professed goodness, it would make my spirit tremble. Once, when I was in the height of my vanity, hearing one swear that was reckoned a religious man, it made my heart to ache."

He was now seventeen, and we can form a tolerably accurate picture of him—a tall, active lad, working as his father's apprentice at his pots and kettles, ignorant of books, and with no notion of the world beyond what he could learn in his daily drudgery, and the talk of the ale-house and the village green; inventing lies to amuse his companions, and swearing that they were true; playing bowls and tip-cat, ready for any reckless action, and always a leader in it, yet all the while singularly pure from the more brutal forms of vice, and haunted with feverish thoughts, which he tried to forget in amusements. It has been the fashion to take his account of himself literally, and represent him as the worst of reprobates, in order to magnify the effects of his conversion, and perhaps to make intelligible to his admiring followers the reproaches which he heaps upon himself. They may have felt that they could not be wrong in explaining his own language in the only sense in which they could attach a meaning to it. Yet, sinner though he may have been, like all the rest of us, his sins were not the sins of coarseness and vulgarity. They were the sons of a youth of sensitive nature and very peculiar gifts—gifts which brought special temptations with them, and inclined him to be careless and desperate, yet from causes singularly unlike those which are usually operative in dissipated and uneducated boys.

It was now the year 1645. Naseby Field was near, and the

the first Civil War was drawing to its close. At this crisis Bunyan was, as he says, drawn to be a soldier; and it is extremely characteristic of him and of the body to which he belonged, that he leaves us to guess on which side he served. He does not tell us himself. His friends in after-life did not care to ask him, or he to inform them, or else they also thought the matter of too small importance to be worth mentioning with exactness. There were two traditions, and his biographers chose between them as we do. Close as the connection was in that great struggle between civil and religious liberty—flung as Bunyan was flung into the very centre of the conflict between the English people and the Crown and Church and aristocracy — victim as he was himself of intolerance and persecution, he never but once took any political part, and then only in signing an address to Cromwell. He never showed any active interest in political questions; and if he spoke on such questions at all after the Restoration, it was to advise submission to the Stuart Government. By the side of the stupendous issues of human life, such miserable *rights* as men might pretend to in this world were not worth contending for. The only *right* of man that he thought much about, was the right to be eternally damned if he did not lay hold of grace. King and subject were alike creatures, whose sole significance lay in their individual immortal souls. Their relations with one another upon earth were nothing in the presence of the awful judgment which awaited them both. Thus, whether Bunyan's brief career in the army was under Charles or under Fairfax most remain doubtful. Probability is on the side of his having been with the Royalists. His father was of "the national religion." He himself had as yet no special convictions of his own. John Gifford, the Baptist minister at Bedford, had been a Royalist. The only incident which Bunyan speaks of connected with his military experience points in the same direction. "When I was a soldier," he says, "I was with others drawn out to go such a place to besiege it. But when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room. Coming to the siege as he stood sentinel he was shot in the heart with a musket bullet and died." Tradition agrees that the place to which these words refer was Leicester. Leicester was stormed by the King's troops a few days before the battle of Naseby. It was recovered afterwards by the Parlimentarians, but on the second occasion there was no fighting, as it capitulated without a shot being fired. Mr. Carlyle supposes that Bunyan was not with the attacking party, but was in the town as one of the garrison, and was taken prisoner there. But this cannot be, for he says expressly that he was one of the besiegers. Legend gathers freely about eminent men, about men especially who are eminent in religion, whether they are Catholic or Protestant. Lord Macaulay is not only positive that the hero of the English Dissenters fought on the side of the Commonwealth, but he says, without a word of caution on the imperfection of his evidence, "His Greatheart, his Captain Boanerges, and his Captain Credence, are evidently portraits of which the originals were

among those martial saints who fought and expounded in Fairfax's army." *

If the martial saints had impressed Bunyan so deeply, it is inconceivable that he should have made no more allusion to his military service than in this brief passage. He refers to the siege and all connected with it merely as another occasion of his own providential escapes from death.

Let the truth of this be what it may, the troop to which he belonged was soon disbanded. He returned at the end of the year to his tinker's work at Elstow much as he had left it. The saints, if he had met with saints, had not converted him. "I sinned still," he says, "and grew more and more rebellious against God and careless of my own salvation." An important change of another kind, however, lay before him. Young as he was, he married. His friends advised it, for they thought that marriage would make him steady. The step was less imprudent than it would have been had Bunyan been in a higher rank of life, or had aimed at rising into it. The girl whom he chose was a poor orphan, but she had been carefully and piously brought up, and from her acceptance of him, something more may be inferred about his character. Had he been a dissolute, idle scamp, it is unlikely that a respectable woman would have become his wife when he was a mere boy. His sins, whatever these were, had not injured his outward circumstances; it is clear that all along he worked skilfully and industriously at his tinkering business. He had none of the habits which bring men to beggary. From the beginning of his life to the end of it he was a prudent, careful man, and, considering the station to which he belonged, a very successful man.

"I lighted on a wife," he says, "whose father was counted godly. We came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household stuff as a dish or a spoon between us. But she had for her portion two books, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*, which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I sometimes read with her. I found some things pleasing to me, but all this while I met with no conviction. She often told me what a godly man her father was; how he would reprove and correct vice both in his house and among his neighbours; what a strict and holy life he lived in his day, both in word and deed. These books, though they did not reach my heart, did light in me some desire to religion."

There was still an Established Church in England, and the constitution of it had not yet been altered. The Presbyterian platform threatened to take the place of Episcopacy, and soon did take it; but the clergyman was still a priest, and was still regarded with pious veneration in the country districts as a semi-supernatural being. The altar yet stood in its place, the minister still appeared in his surplice, and the Prayers of the Liturgy continued to be read or intoned. The old familiar bells, Catholic as they

* *Life of Bunyan*: Collected Works, vol. vii. p. 299.

were in all the emotions which they suggested, called the congregation together with their musical peal, though in the midst of triumphant Puritanism. The *Book of Sports*, which under an order from Charles I., had been read regularly in Church, had in 1644 been laid under a ban; but the gloom of a Presbyterian Sunday was, is, and for ever will be detestable to the natural man; and the Elstow population gathered persistently after service on the village green for their dancing, and their leaping, and their archery. Long habit cannot be transformed in a day by an Edict of Council, and amidst army manifestoes and battles of Marston Moor, and a king dethroned and imprisoned, old English life in Bedfordshire preserved its familiar features. These Sunday sports had been a special delight to Bunyan, and it is to them which he refers in the following passage, when speaking of his persistent wickedness. On his marriage he became regular and respectable in his habits. He says, "I fell in with the religion of the times to go to church twice a day, very devoutly to say and sing as the others did, yet retaining my wicked life. Withal I was so overrun with the spirit of superstition that I adored with great devotion even all things, both the high place, priest, clerk, vestment, service, and what else belonging to the Church, counting all things holy therein contained, and especially the priest and clerk most happy and without doubt greatly blessed. This conceit grew so strong in my spirit that had I but seen a priest, though never so sordid and debauched in his life, I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence, and be knit to him—their name, their garb, and work did so intoxicate and bewitch me."

Surely if there were no other evidence, these words would show that the writer of them had never listened to the expositions of the martial saints.

CHAPTER II.

CONVICTION OF SIN.

The Pilgrim's Progress is the history of the struggle of human nature to overcome temptation and shake off the bondage of sin, under the convictions which prevailed among serious men in England in the seventeenth century. The allegory is the life of its author cast in an imaginative form. Every step in Christian's journey had been first trodden by Bunyan himself; every pang of fear and shame, every spasm of despair, every breath of hope and consolation, which is there described, is but a reflexion as on a mirror from personal experience. It has spoken to the hearts of all later generations of Englishmen because it came from the heart; because it is the true record of the genuine emotions of a human soul; and to such a record the emotions of other men will respond, as one stringed instrument vibrates responsively to another. The poet's power lies in creating sympathy; but he cannot, however richly gifted, stir feelings which he has not himself known in all their intensity.

> "Ut ridentibus arrident ita flentibus adflent
> Humani vultus. Si vis me flere dolendum est
> Primum ipsi tibi."

The religious history of man is essentially the same in all ages. It takes its rise in the duality of his nature. He is an animal, and as an animal he desires bodily pleasure and shrinks from bodily pain. As a being capable of morality, he is conscious that for him there exists a right and wrong. Something, whatever that something may be, binds him to choose one and avoid the other. This is his religion, his religatio, his obligation, in the sense in which the Romans, from whom we take it, used the word; and obligation implies some superior power to which man owes obedience. The conflict between his two dispositions agitates his heart and perplexes his intellect. To do what the superior power requires of him, he must thwart his inclinations. He dreads punishment, if he neglects to do it. He invents methods by which he can indulge his appetites, and finds a substitute by which he can propitiate his

invisible ruler or rulers. He offers sacrifices; he institutes ceremonies and observances. This is the religion of the body, the religion of fear. It is what we call superstition. In his nobler moods he feels that this is but to evade the difficulty. He perceives that the sacrifice required is the sacrifice of himself. It is not the penalty for sin which he must fear, but the sin itself. He must conquer his own lower nature. He must detach his heart from his pleasures, and he must love good for its own sake, and because it is his only real good; and this is spiritual religion or piety. Between these two forms of worship of the unseen, the human race has swayed to and fro from the first moment in which they learnt to discern between good and evil. Superstition attracts, because it is indulgent to immorality by providing means by which God can be pacified. But it carries its antidote along with it, for it keeps alive the sense of God's existence; and when it has produced its natural effects, when the believer rests in his observances and lives practically as if there was no God at all, the conscience again awakes. Sacrifices and ceremonies become detested as idolatry, and religion becomes conviction of sin, a fiery determination to fight with the whole soul against appetite, vanity, self-seeking, and every mean propensity which the most sensitive alarm can detect. The battle unhappily is attended with many vicissitudes. The victory, though practically it may be won, is never wholly won. The struggle brings with it every variety of emotion, alternations of humility and confidence, despondency and hope. The essence of it is always the same—the effort of the higher nature to overcome the lower. The form of it varies from period to period, according to the conditions of the time, the temperament of different people, the conception of the character of the Supreme Power, which the state of knowledge enables men to form. It will be found even when the puzzled intellect can see no light in Heaven at all, in the stern and silent fulfilment of moral duty. It will appear as enthusiasm; it will appear as asceticism; it will appear wherever there is courage to sacrifice personal enjoyment for a cause believed to be holy. We must all live. We must all, as we suppose, in one shape or other, give account for our actions; and accounts of the conflict are most individually interesting when it is an open wrestle with the enemy; as we find in the penances and austerities of the Catholic saints, or when the difficulties of belief are confessed and detailed, as in David's Psalms, or in the Epistles of St. Paul. St. Paul, like the rest of mankind, found a law in his members warring against the law which was in his heart. The problem presented to him was how one was to be brought into subjection to the other, and the solution was by "the putting on of Christ." St. Paul's mind was charged with the ideas of Oriental and Greek philosophy then prevalent in the Roman Empire. His hearers understood him, because he spoke in the language of the prevailing speculations. We who have not the clue cannot, perhaps, perfectly understand him; but his words have been variously interpreted as human intelligence has expanded, and have formed

the basis of the two great theologies, which have been developed out of Christianity. The Christian religion taught that evil could not be overcome by natural human strength. The Son of God had come miraculously upon earth, had lived a life of stainless purity, and had been offered as a sacrifice to redeem men conditionally from the power of sin. The conditions, as English Protestant theology understands them, are nowhere more completely represented than in *The Pilgrim's Progress.* The Catholic theology, rising as it did in the two centuries immediately following St. Paul, approached, probably, nearer to what he really intended to say.

Catholic theology, as a system, is a development of Platonism. The Platonists had discovered that the seat of moral evil was material substance. In matter, and therefore in the human body, there was either some inherent imperfection, or some ingrained perversity and antagonism to good. The soul, so long as it was attached to the body, was necessarily infected by it; and as human life on earth consisted in the connection of soul and body, every single man was necessarily subject to infirmity. Catholic theology accepted the position and formulated an escape from it. The evil in matter was a fact. It was explained by Adam's sin. But there it was. The taint was inherited by all Adam's posterity. The flesh of man was incurably vitiated, and if he was to be saved, a new body must be prepared for him. This Christ had done. That Christ's body was not as other men's bodies was proved after his resurrection, when it showed itself independent of the limitations of extended substance. In virtue of these mysterious properties, it became the body of the Corporate Church, into which believers were admitted by baptism. The natural body was not at once destroyed, but a new element was introduced into it, by the power of which, assisted by penance, and mortification, and the spiritual food of the Eucharist, the grosser qualities were gradually subdued, and the corporal system was changed. Then body and spirit became alike pure together, and the saint became capable of obedience, so perfect as not only to suffice for himself but to supply the wants of others. The corruptible put on incorruption. The bodies of the saints worked miracles, and their flesh was found unaffected by decay after hundreds of years.

This belief, so long as it was sincerely held, issued naturally in characters of extreme beauty—of beauty so great as almost to demonstrate its truth. The purpose of it, so far as it affected action, was self-conquest. Those who try with their whole souls to conquer themselves find the effort lightened by a conviction that they are receiving supernatural assistance; and the form in which the Catholic theory supposed the assistance to be given was at least perfectly innocent. But it is in the nature of human speculations, though they may have been entertained at first in entire good faith, to break down under trial, if they are not in conformity with fact. Catholic theology furnished Europe with a rule of faith and action which lasted 1500 years. For the last three centuries of that period it was changing from a religion into a superstition,

till, from being the world's guide, it became its scandal. "The body of Christ" had become a kingdom of this world, insulting its subjects by the effrontery of its ministers, the insolence of its pretensions, the mountains of lies which it was teaching as sacred truths. Luther spoke; and over half the Western world the Catholic Church collapsed, and a new theory and Christianity had to be constructed out of the fragments of it.

There was left behind a fixed belief in God and in the Bible as His revealed word, in a future judgment, in the fall of man, in the atonement made for sin by the death of Christ, and in the new life which was made possible by His resurrection. The change was in the conception of the method by which the atonement was imagined to be efficacious. The material or sacramental view of it, though it lingered inconsistently in the mind even of Luther himself, was substantially gone. New ideas adopted in enthusiams are necessarily extreme. The wrath of God was held to be inseparably and eternally attached to every act of sin, however infirm the sinner. That his nature could be changed, and that he could be mystically strengthened by incorporation with Christ's body in the Church, was contrary to experience, and was no longer credible, The conscience of every man, in the Church or out of it, told him that he was daily and hourly offending. God's law demands a life of perfect obedience, eternal death being the penalty of the lightest breach of it. No human being was capable of such perfect obedience. He could not do one single act which would endure so strict a scrutiny. All mankind were thus included under sin. The Catholic Purgatory was swept away. It had degenerated into a contrivance for feeding the priests with money, and it implied that human nature could in itself be renovated by its own sufferings. Thus nothing lay before the whole race except everlasting reprobation. But the door of hope had been opened on the cross of Christ. Christ had done what man could never do. He had fulfilled the law perfectly. God was ready to accept Christ's perfect righteousness as a substitute for the righteousness which man was required to present to him, but could not. The conditions of acceptance were no longer sacraments or outward acts, or lame and impotent efforts after a moral life, but faith in what Christ had done; a complete self-abnegation, a resigned consciousness of utter unworthiness, and an unreserved acceptance of the mercy held out through the Atonement. It might have been thought that since man was born so weak that it was impossible for him to do what the law required, consideration would be had for his infirmity; that it was even dangerous to attribute to the Almighty a character so arbitrary as that He would exact an account from his creatures which the creature's necessary inadequacy rendered him incapable of meeting. But the impetuosity of the new theology would listen to no such excuses. God was infinitely pure, and nothing impure could stand in his sight. Man, so long as he rested on merit of his own, must be for ever excluded from his presence. He must accept grace on the terms on which it was held out to him; then,

and then only, God would extend his pity to him. He was no longer a child of wrath: he was God's child. His infirmities remained, but they were constantly obliterated by the merits of Christ. And he had strength given to him partially, at least, to overcome temptation, under which, but for that strength, he would have fallen, Though nothing which he could do could deserve reward, yet he received grace in proportion to the firmness of his belief; and his efforts after obedience, imperfect though they might be, were accepted for Christ's sake. A good life, or a constant effort after a good life, was still the object which a man was bound to labour after. Though giving no claim to pardon, still less for reward, it was the necessary fruit of a sense of what Christ had done, and of love and gratitude towards him. Good works were the test of saving faith; and if there were no signs of them, the faith was barren: it was not real faith at all.

This was the Puritan belief in England in the seventeenth century. The reason starts at it, but all religion is paradoxical to reason. God hates sin, yet sin exists. He is omnipotent, yet evil is not overcome. The will of man is free, or there can be no guilt; yet the action of the will, so far as experience can throw light on its operation, is as much determined by antecedent causes as every other natural force. Prayer is addressed to a Being assumed to be omniscient; who knows better what is good for us than we can know; who sees our thoughts without requiring to hear them in words; whose will is fixed and cannot be changed. Prayer, therefore, in the eye of reason, is an impertinence. The Puritan theology is not more open to objection on the ground of unreasonableness than the Catholic theology, or any other which regards man as answerable to God for his conduct. We must judge of a creed by its effects on character, as we judge of the wholesomeness of food as it conduces to bodily health. And the creed which swept like a wave through England at that time, and recommended itself to the noblest and most powerful intellects, produced also in those who accepted it a horror of sin, and enthusiasm for justice, purity, and manliness, which can be paralleled only in the first age of Christianity. Certainly there never was such a theory to take man's conceit out of him. He was a miserable wretch, so worthless at his best as to deserve everlasting perdition. If he was to be saved at all, he could be saved only by the unmerited grace of God. In himself he was a child of the devil; and hell, not in metaphor, but in hard and palpable fact, inevitably waited for him. This belief, or the affectation of this belief, continues to be professed, but without a realisation of its tremendous meaning. The form of words is repeated by multitudes who do not care to think what they are saying. Who can measure the effect of such a conviction upon men who were in earnest about their souls, who were assured that this account of their situation was actually true, and on whom, therefore, it bore with increasing weight in proportion to their sincerity?

With these few prefatory words, I now return to Bunyan. He had begun to go regularly to church, and by church he meant the

Church of England. The change in the constitution of it, even when it came, did not much alter its practical character in the country districts. At Elstow, as we have seen, there was still a high place; there was still a liturgy; there was still a surplice. The Church of England is a compromise between the old theology and the new. The Bishops have the apostolical succession, but many of them disbelieve that they derive any virtue from it. The clergyman is either a priest who can absolve men from sins, or he is a minister, as in other Protestant communions. The sacraments are either means of grace or mere outward signs. A Christian is either saved by baptism or saved by faith, as he pleases to believe. In either case he may be a member of the Church of England. The effect of such uncertain utterances is to leave an impression that, in defining such points closely, theologians are laying down lines of doctrines about subjects of which they know nothing, that the real truth of religion lies in what is common to the two theories, the obligation to lead a moral life; and to this sensible view of their functions the bishops and clergy had, in fact, gradually arrived in the last century, when the revival of what is called earnestness, first in the form of Evangelicalism, and then of Anglo-Catholicism, awoke again the old controversies.

To a man of fervid temperament suddenly convinced of sin, incapable of being satisfied with ambiguous answers to questions which mean life or death to him, the Church of England has little to say. If he is quiet and reasonable, he finds in it all that he desires. Enthusiastic ages and enthusiastical temperaments demand something more complete and consistent. The clergy under the Long Parliament caught partially the tone of the prevailing spirit. The reading of the *Book of Sports* had been interdicted, and from their pulpits they lectured their congregations on the ungodliness of the Sabbath amusements. But the congregations were slow to listen, and the sports went on.

One Sunday morning, when Bunyan was at church with his wife, a sermon was delivered on this subject. It seemed to be especially addressed to himself, and it much affected him. He shook off the impression, and after dinner he went as usual to the green. He was on the point of striking at a ball when the thought rushed across his mind, Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell? He looked up. The reflection of his own emotion was before him in visible form. He imagined that he saw Christ himself looking down at him from the sky. But he concluded that it was too late for him to repent. He was past pardon. He was sure to be damned, and he might as well be damned for many sins as for few. Sin, at all events, was pleasant, the only pleasant thing that he knew; therefore he would take his fill of it. The sin was the game, and nothing but the game. He continued to play, but the Puritan sensitiveness had taken hold of him. An artificial offence had become a real offence when his conscience was wounded by it. He was reckless and desperate.

"This temptation of the devil,' he says, "is more usual among

poor creatures than many are aware of. It continued with me about a month or more; but one day, as I was standing at a neighbour's shop-window, and there cursing and swearing after my wonted manner, there sat within the woman of the house and heard me, who, though she was a loose and ungodly wretch, protested that I swore and cursed at such a rate that she trembled to hear me. I was able to spoil all the youths in a whole town. At this reproof I was silenced and put to secret shame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of heaven. I stood hanging down my head, and wishing that I might be a little child, that my father might learn me to speak without this wicked sin of swearing; for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it that it is vain to think of a reformation."

These words have been sometimes taken as a reflection on Bunyan's own father, as if he had not sufficiently checked the first symptoms of a bad habit. If this was so, too much may be easily made of it. The language in the homes of ignorant workmen is seldom select. They have not a large vocabulary, and the words which they use do not mean what they seem to mean. But so sharp and sudden remorse speaks remarkably for Bunyan himself. At this time he could have been barely twenty years old, and already he was quick to see when he was doing wrong, to be sorry for it, and to wish that he could do better. Vain the effort seemed to him, yet from that moment "he did leave off swearing, to his own great wonder;" and he found "that he could speak better and more pleasantly than he did before."

It lies in the nature of human advance on the road of improvement, that, whatever be a man's occupation, be it handicraft, or art, or knowledge, or moral conquest of self, at each forward step which he takes he grows more conscious of his shortcomings. It is thus with his whole career, and those who rise highest are least satisfied with themselves. Very simply Bunyan tells the story of his progress. On his outward history, on his business and his fortunes with it, he is totally silent. Worldly interests were not worth mentioning. He is solely occupied with his rescue from spiritual perdition. Soon after he had profited by the woman's rebuke, he fell in "with a poor man that made profession of religion and talked pleasantly of the Scriptures." Earnestness in such matters was growing common among English labourers. Under his new friend's example, Bunyan "betook him to the Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading it," but especially, as he admits frankly (and most people's experience will have been the same), "the historical part; for as for St. Paul's Epistles and Scriptures of that nature, he could not away with them, being as yet ignorant of the corruption of his nature, or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save him."

Not as yet understanding these mysteries, he set himself to reform his life. He became strict with himself in word and deed. "He set the Commandments before him for his way to heaven." "He thought if he could but keep them pretty well he should have

comfort." If now and then he broke one of them, he suffered in conscience; he repented of his fault; he made good resolutions for the future, and struggled to carry them out. "His neighbours took him to be a new man, and marvelled at the alteration." Pleasure of any kind, even the most innocent, he considered to be a snare to him, and he abandoned it. He had been fond of dancing, but he gave it up. Music and singing he parted with, though it distressed him to leave them. Of all amusements, that in which he had most delighted had been in ringing the bells in Elstow church tower. With his bells he could not part all at once. He would no longer ring himself: but when his friends were enjoying themselves with the ropes, he could not help going now and then to the tower door to look on and listen; but he feared at last that the steeple might fall upon him and kill him. We call such scruples in these days exaggerated and fantastic. We are no longer in danger ourselves of suffering from similar emotions. Whether we are the better for having got rid of them will be seen in the future history of our race.

Notwithstanding his struggles and his sacrifices, Bunyan found that they did not bring him the peace which he expected. A man can change his outward conduct; but if he is in earnest, he comes in sight of other features in himself which he cannot change so easily—the meannesses, the paltrinesses, the selfishnesses which haunt him in spite of himself, which start out upon him at moments the most unlooked for, which taint the best of his actions and make him loathe and hate himself. Bunyan's life was now, for so young a person, a model of correctness; but he had no sooner brought his actions straight than he discovered that he was admiring and approving of himself. No situation is more humiliating, none brings with it a feeling of more entire hopelessness. "All this while," he says, "I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope: and had I then died, my state had been most fearful. I was but a poor painted hypocrite, going about to establish my own righteousness."

Like his own Pilgrim, he had the burden on his back of his conscious unworthiness. How was he to be rid of it?

"One day, in a street in Bedford, as he was at work in his calling, he fell in with three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun talking about the things of God." He was himself at that time "a brisk talker" about the matters of religion, and he joined these women. Their expressions were wholly unintelligible to him. "They were speaking of the wretchedness of their own hearts, of their unbelief, of their miserable state. They did contemn, slight, and abhor their own righteousness as filthy and insufficient to do them any good. They spoke of a new birth and of the work of God in their hearts, which comforted and strengthened them against the temptations of the devil."

The language of the poor women has lost its old meaning. They themselves, if they were alive, would not use it any longer. The conventional phrases of Evangelical Christianity ring untrue

in a modern ear like a cracked bell. We have grown so accustomed to them as a cant, that we can hardly believe that they ever stood for sincere convictions. Yet these forms were once alive with the profoundest of all moral truths—a truth not of a narrow theology, but which lies at the very bottom of the well, at the fountain-head of human morality; namely, that a man who would work out his salvation must cast out self, though he rend his heart-strings in doing it: not love of self-indulgence only, but self-applause, self-confidence, self-conceit and vanity, desire or expectation of reward; self in all the subtle ingenuities with which it winds about the soul. In one dialect or another, he must recognize that he is himself a poor creature not worth thinking of, or he will not take the first step towards excellence in any single thing which he undertakes.

Bunyan left the women and went about his work, but their talk went with him. "He was greatly affected." "He saw that he wanted the true tokens of a godly man." He sought them out, and spoke with them again and again. He could not stay away; and the more he went, the more he questioned his condition.

"I found two things," he says, "at which I did sometimes marvel, considering what a blind, ungodly wretch but just before I was; one, a great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fall under the conviction of what, by Scripture, they asserted; the other, a great bending of my mind to a continual meditating on it. My mind was now like a horse-leech at the vein, still crying, Give, give; so fixed on eternity and on the kingdom of heaven (though I knew but little), that neither pleasure, nor profit, nor persuasion, nor threats could loosen it or make it let go its hold. It is in very deed a certain truth; it would have been then as difficult for me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often since to get it from earth to heaven."

Ordinary persons who are conscious of trying to do right, who resist temptations, are sorry when they slip, and determine to be more on their guard for the future, are well contented with the condition which they have reached. They are respectable; they are right-minded in common things; they fulfil their every-day duties to their families and to society with a sufficiency for which the world speaks well of them, as indeed it ought to speak; and they themselves acquiesce in the world's verdict. Any passionate agitation about the state of their souls they consider unreal and affected. Such men may be amiable in private life, good neighbours, and useful citizens; but be their talents what they may, they could not write a *Pilgrim's Progress*, or even reach the Delectable Mountains, or even be conscious that such mountains exist.

Bunyan was on the threshold of the higher life. He knew that he was a very poor creature. He longed to rise to something better. He was a mere ignorant, untaught mechanic. He had not been to school with Aristotle and Plato. He could not help himself, or lose himself in the speculations of poets and philosophers.

He had only the Bible, and, studying the Bible, he found that the wonder-working power in man's nature was Faith. Faith! What was it? What did it mean? Had he faith? He was but "a poor sot," and yet he thought that he could not be wholly without it. The Bible told him that if he had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, he could work miracles. He did not understand Oriental metaphors; here was a simple test which could be at once applied.

"On day," he writes, "as I was between Elstow and Bedford, the temptation was hot upon me to try if I had faith by doing some miracle. I must say to the puddles that were in the horse-pads, "be dry," and truly at one time I was agoing to say so indeed. But just as I was about to speak, the thought came into my mind: Go under yonder hedge first and pray that God would make you able. But when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, that if I prayed and came again and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then be sure I had no faith, but was a castaway, and lost. Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try it yet, but will stay a little longer. Thus was I tossed between the devil and my own ignorance, and so perplexed at some times that I could not tell what to do."

Common-sense will call this disease, and will think impatiently that the young tinker would have done better to attend to his business. But it must be observed that Bunyan was attending to his business, toiling all the while with grimed hands over his pots and kettles. No one ever complained that the pots and kettles were ill-mended. It was merely that, being simple-minded, he found in his Bible that, besides earning his bread, he had to save or lose his soul. Having no other guide, he took its words literally, and the directions puzzled him.

He grew more and more unhappy, more lowly in his own eyes—

"Wishing him like to those more rich in hope"—

like the women who were so far beyond him on the heavenly road. He was a poet without knowing it, and his gifts only served to perplex him further. His speculations assumed bodily forms which he supposed to be actual visions. He saw his poor friends sitting on the sunny side of a high mountain refreshing themselves in the warmth, while he was shivering in frost, and snow, and mist. The mountain was surrounded by a wall, through which he tried to pass, and searched long in vain for an opening through it. At last he found one, very straight and narrow, through which he struggled, after desperate efforts. "It showed him," he said, "that none could enter into life but those who were in downright earnest, and unless they left the wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for body and soul and sin." The vision brought him no comfort, for it passed away, and left him still on the wrong side: a little comfortable self-conceit would have set him at rest. But, like all real men, Bunyan had the worst opinion of himself. He looked at his Bible again. He found that he must be elected. Was he elected? He could as little tell as whether he

had faith. He knew that he longed to be elected, but "the Scripture trampled on his desire;" for it said, "It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;" therefore, unless God had chosen him, his labour was in vain. The devil saw his opportunity; the devil, among his other attributes, must have possessed that of omnipresence; for whenever any human soul was in straits, he was personally at hand to take advantage of it.

"It may be that you are not elected," the tempter said to Bunyan. "It may be so indeed," thought he. "Why, then," said Satan, "you had as good leave off and strive no farther; for if, indeed, you should not be elected and chosen of God, there is no talk of your being saved."

A comforting test suggested itself. "Look at the generations of old; did any ever trust in the Lord and was confounded?" But these exact words, unfortunately, were only to be found in the Apocrypha. And there was a further distressing possibility, which has occurred to others besides Bunyan. Perhaps the day of grace was passed. It came on him one day as he walked in the country that perhaps those good people in Bedford were all that the Lord would save in those parts, and that he came too late for the blessing. True, Christ had said, "Compel them to come in, for yet there is room." It might be "that when Christ spoke those words," He was thinking of him—him among the rest that he had chosen, and had meant to encourage him. But Bunyan was too simply modest to gather comfort from such aspiring thoughts. He desired to be converted, craved for it, longed for it with all his heart and soul. "Could it have been gotten for gold," he said, "what would I not have given for it! Had I had a whole world it had all gone ten thousand times over for this, that my soul might have been in a converted state. But, oh! I was made sick by that saying of Christ: 'He called to Him whom He would, and they came to Him.' I feared He would not call me."

Election, conversion, day of grace, coming to Christ, have been pawed and fingered by unctuous hands for now two hundred years. The bloom is gone from the flower. The plumage, once shining with hues direct from heaven, is soiled and bedraggled. The most solemn of all realities have been degraded into the passwords of technical theology. In Bunyan's day, in camp and council chamber, in High Courts of Parliament, and among the poor drudges in English villages, they were still radiant with spiritual meaning. The dialect may alter; but if man is more than a brief floating bubble on the eternal river of time; if there be really an immortal part of him which need not perish; and if his business on earth is to save it from perishing—he will still try to pierce the mountain barrier; he will still find the work as hard as Bunyan found it. We live in days of progress and enlightenment; nature on a hundred sides has unlocked her storehouses of knowledge. But she has furnished no "open sesame" to bid the mountain gate fly wide which leads to conquest of self. There is still no passage there for "body and soul and sin."

CHAPTER III.

"GRACE ABOUNDING."

THE women in Bedford, to whom Bunyan had opened his mind, had been naturally interested in him. Young and rough as he was, he could not have failed to impress anyone who conversed with him with a sense that he was a remarkable person. They mentioned him to Mr. Gifford, the minister of the Baptist Church at Bedford. John Gifford had, at the beginning of the Civil War, been a loose young officer in the king's army. He had been taken prisoner when engaged in some exploit which was contrary to the usages of war. A court-martial had sentenced him to death, and he was to have been shot in a few hours, when he broke out of his prison with his sister's help, and, after various adventures, settled at Bedford as a doctor. The near escape had not sobered him. He led a disorderly life, drinking and gambling, till the loss of a large sum of money startled him into seriousness. In the language of the time, he became convinced of sin, and joined the Baptists, the most thorough-going and consistent of all the Protestant sects. If the Sacrament of Baptism is not a magical form, but is a personal act, in which the baptised person devotes himself to Christ's service, to baptise children at an age when they cannot understand what they are doing may well seem irrational and even impious.

Gifford, who was now the head of the Baptist community in the town, invited Bunyan to his house, and explained the causes of his distress to him. He was a lost sinner. It was true that he had parted with his old faults, and was leading a new life. But his heart was unchanged ; his past offences stood in record against him. He was still under the wrath of God, miserable in his position, and therefore miserable in mind. He must become sensible of his lost state, and lay hold of the only remedy, or there was no hope for him.

There was no difficulty in convincing Bunyan that he was in a bad way. He was too well aware of it already. In a work of fiction the conviction would be followed immediately by consoling grace. In the actual experience of a living human soul, the medicine operates less pleasantly.

"I began," he says, "to see something of the vanity and inward wretchedness of my wicked heart, for as yet I knew no great matter

therein. But now it began to be discovered unto me, and to work for wickedness as it never did before. Lusts and corruptions would strongly put themselves forth within me in wicked thoughts and desires which I did not regard before. Whereas, before, my soul was full of longing after God; now my heart began to hanker after every foolish vanity."

Constitutions differ. Mr. Gifford's treatment, if it was ever good for any man, was too sharp for Bunyan. The fierce acid which had been poured into his wounds set them all festering again. He frankly admits that he was now farther from conversion than before. His heart, do what he would, refused to leave off desiring forbidden pleasures, and while this continued, he supposed that he was still under the law, and must perish by it. He compared himself to the child who, as he was being brought to Christ, was thrown down by the devil and wallowed foaming. A less healthy nature might have been destroyed by these artificially created and exaggerated miseries. He supposed he was given over to unbelief and wickedness, and yet he relates, with touching simplicity :—

"As to the act of sinning I was never more tender than now. I durst not take up a pin or a stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore, and would smart at every touch. I could not tell how to speak my words for fear I should misplace them."

But the care with which he watched his conduct availed him nothing. He was on a morass "that shook if he did but stir," and he was "there left both of God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and of all good things." Behind him lay the faults of his childhood and youth, every one of which he believed to be recorded against him. Within were his disobedient inclinations, which he conceived to be the presence of the devil in his heart. If he was to be presented clean of stain before God he must have a perfect righteousness, which was to be found only in Christ, and Christ had rejected him. "My original and inward pollution," he writes, "was my plague and my affliction. I was more loathsome in my own eyes than was a toad, and I thought I was so in God's eyes too. I thought every one had a better heart than I had. I could have changed heart with anybody. I thought none but the devil himself could equal me for inward wickedness and pollution. Sure, thought I, I am given up to the devil and to a reprobate mind; and thus I continued for a long while, even for some years together."

And all the while the world went on so quietly; these things over which Bunyan was so miserable not seeming to trouble anyone except himself; and as if they had no existence except on Sundays and in pious talk. Old people were hunting after the treasures of this life, as if they were never to leave the earth. Professors of religion complained when they lost fortune or health; what were fortune and health to the awful possibilities which lay beyond the grave? To Bunyan the future life of Christianity was a reality as certain as the next day's sunrise; and he could have been happy on bread and water if he could have felt himself pre-

pared to enter it. Every created being seemed better off than he was. He was sorry that God had made him a man. He "blessed the condition of the birds, beasts, and fishes, for they had not a sinful nature. They were not obnoxious to the wrath of God; they were not to go to hell-fire after death." He recalled the texts which spoke of Christ and forgiveness. He tried to persuade himself that Christ cared for him. He could have talked of Christ's love and mercy "even to the very crows which sat on the ploughed land before him." But he was too sincere to satisfy himself with formulas and phrases. He could not, he would not, profess to be convinced that things would go well with him when he was not convinced. Cold spasms of doubt laid hold of him—doubts, not so much of his own salvation, as of the truth of all that he had been taught to believe; and the problem had to be fought and grappled with, which lies in the intellectual nature of every genuine man, whether he be an Æschylus or a Shakspeare, or a poor working Bedfordshire mechanic. No honest soul can look out upon the world and see it as it really is, without the question rising in him whether there be any God that governs it at all. No one can accept the popular notion of heaven and hell as actually true, without being as terrified as Bunyan was. We go on as we do, and attend to our business and enjoy ourselves, because the words have no real meaning to us. Providence in its kindness leaves most of us unblessed or uncursed with natures of too fine a fibre.

Bunyan was hardly dealt with. "Whole floods of blasphemies," he says, "against God, Christ, and the Scriptures were poured upon my spirit; questions against the very being of God and of his only beloved Son, as whether there was in truth a God or Christ, or no, and whether the Holy Scriptures were not rather a fable and cunning story than the holy and pure Word of God."

"How can you tell," the tempter whispered, "but that the Turks have as good a Scripture to prove their Mahomet the Saviour, as we have to prove our Jesus is? Could I think that so many tens of thousands, in so many countries and kingdoms, should be without the knowledge of the right way to heaven, if there were indeed a heaven, and that we who lie in a corner of the earth should alone be blessed therewith? every one doth think his own religion the rightest—both Jews, Moors, and Pagans; and how if all our faith, and Christ, and Scripture should be but 'a think so' too?" St. Paul spoke positively. Bunyan saw shrewdly that on St. Paul the weight of the whole Christian theory really rested. But "how could he tell but that St. Paul, being a subtle and cunning man, might give himself up to deceive with strong delusions?" "He was carried away by such thoughts as by a whirlwind."

His belief in the active agency of the devil in human affairs, of which he supposed that he had witnessed instances, was no doubt a great help to him. If he could have imagined that his doubts or misgivings had been suggested by a desire for truth, they would have been harder to bear. More than ever he was

convinced that he was possessed by the devil. He "compared himself to a child carried off by a gipsy." "Kick sometimes I did," he says, "and scream, and cry, but yet I was as bound in thI wings of temptation, and the wind would bear me away." "e blessed the dog and toad, and counted the condition of everything that God had made far better than this dreadful state of mine. The dog or horse had no soul to perish under the everlasting weight of hell or sin, as mine was like to do."

Doubts about revelation and the truth of Scripture were more easy to encounter then than they are at present. Bunyan was protected by want of learning, and by a powerful predisposition to find the objections against the credibility of the Gospel history to be groundless. Critical investigation had not as yet analysed the historical construction of the sacred books; and scepticism, as he saw it in people round him, did actually come from the devil; that is, from a desire to escape the moral restraints of religion. The wisest, noblest, best instructed men in England at that time regarded the Bible as an authentic communication from God, and as the only foundation for law and civil society. The masculine sense and strong, modest intellect of Bunyan ensured his acquiescence in an opinion so powerfully supported. Fits of uncertainty recurred even to the end of his life; it must be so with men who are honestly in earnest; but his doubts were of course only intermittent, and his judgment was in the main satisfied that the Bible was, as he had been taught, the Word of God. This, however, helped him little; for in the Bible he read his own condemnation. The weight which pressed him down was the sense of his unworthiness. What was he that God should care for him? He fancied that he heard God saying to the angels, "This poor, simple wretch doth hanker after me, as if I had nothing to do with my mercy but to bestow it on such as he. Poor fool, how art thou deceived! It is not for such as thee to have favour with the Highest."

Miserable as he was, he clung to his misery as the one link which connected him with the object of his longings. If he had no hope of heaven, he was at least distracted that he must lose it. He was afraid of dying, yet he was still more afraid of continuing to live; lest the impression should wear away through time, and occupation and other interests should turn his heart away to the world, and thus his wounds might cease to pain him.

Readers of the "Pilgrim's Progress" sometimes ask with wonder, why, after Christian had been received into the narrow gate, and had been set forward upon his way, so many trials and dangers still lay before him. The answer is simply that Christian was a pilgrim, that the journey of life still lay before him, and at every step temptations would meet him in new, unexpected shapes. St. Anthony in his hermitage was beset by as many fiends as had ever troubled him when in the world. Man's spiritual existence is like the flight of a bird in the air; he is sustained only by effort, and when he ceases to exert himself he falls. There are intervals,

however, of comparative calm, and to one of these the storm-tossed Bunyan was now approaching. He had passed through the Slough of Despond. He had gone astray after Mr. Legality, and the rocks had almost overwhelmed him. Evangelist now found him and put him right again, and he was to be allowed a breathing space at the Interpreter's house. As he was at his ordinary daily work, his mind was restlessly busy. Verses of Scripture came into his head, sweet while present, but, like Peter's sheet, caught up again into heaven. We may have heard all our lives of Christ. Words and ideas with which we have been familiar from childhood are trodden into paths as barren as sand. Suddenly, we know not how, the meaning flashes upon us. The seed has found its way into some corner of our minds where it can germinate. The shell breaks, the cotyledons open, and the plant of faith is alive. So it was now to be with Bunyan.

"One day," he says, "as I was travelling into the country, musing on the wickedness of my heart, and considering the enmity that was in me to God, the Scripture came into my mind, 'He hath made peace through the blood of His cross.' I saw that the justice of God and my sinful soul could embrace and kiss each other. I was ready to swoon, not with grief and trouble, but with solid joy and peace." Everything became clear: the Gospel history, the birth, the life, the death of the Saviour; how gently he gave himself to be nailed on the cross for his (Bunyan's) sins. "I saw Him in the spirit," he goes on, "a man on the right hand of the Father, pleading for me, and have seen the manner of His coming from heaven to judge the world with glory."

The sense of guilt which had so oppressed him was now a key to the mystery. "God," he says, "suffered me to be afflicted with temptations concerning these things, and then revealed them to me." He was crushed to the ground by the thought of his wickedness; "the Lord showed him the death of Christ, and lifted the weight away."

Now he thought he had a personal evidence from heaven that he was really saved. Before this, he had lain trembling at the mouth of hell; now he was so far away from it that he could scarce tell where it was. He fell in at the time with a copy of Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, "so old that it was like to fall to pieces." Bunyan found in it the exact counterpart of his own experience: "of all the books that he had ever met with, it seemed to him the most fit for a wounded conscience."

Everything was supernatural with him: when a bad thought came into his mind, it was the devil that put it there. These breathings of peace he regarded as the immediate voice of his Saviour. Alas! the respite was but short. He had hoped that his troubles were over, when the tempter came back upon him in the most extraordinary form which he had yet assumed. Bunyan had himself left the door open; the evil spirits could only enter "Mansoul" through the owner's negligence, but once in, they could work their own wicked will. How it happened will be told

afterwards. The temptation itself must be described first. Never was a nature more perversely ingenious in torturing itself.

He had gained Christ, as he called it. He was now tempted "to sell and part with this most blessed Christ, to exchange Him for the things of this life—for anything." If there had been any real prospect of worldly advantage before Bunyan, which he could have gained by abandoning his religious profession, the words would have had a meaning; but there is no hint or trace of any prospect of the kind; nor in Bunyan's position could there have been. The temptation, as he called it, was a freak of fancy: fancy resenting the minuteness with which he watched his own emotions. And yet he says, "It lay upon me for a year, and did follow me so continually that I was not rid of it one day in a month, sometimes not an hour in many days together, unless when I was asleep. I could neither eat my food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, or cast my eye to look on this or that, but still the temptation would come, 'Sell Christ for this, sell Him for that! Sell Him! Sell Him!'"

He had been haunted before with a notion that he was under a spell; that he had been fated to commit the unpardonable sin; and he was now thinking of Judas, who had been admitted to Christ's intimacy, and had then betrayed him. Here it was before him—the very thing which he had so long dreaded. If his heart did but consent for a moment, the deed was done. His doom had overtaken him. He wrestled with the thought as it rose, thrust it from him "with his hands and elbows," body and mind convulsed together in a common agony. As fast as the destroyer said, "Sell Him," Bunyan said, "I will not; I will not; I will not; not for thousands, thousands, thousands of worlds!" One morning, as he lay in his bed, the voice came again, and would not be driven away. Bunyan fought against it till he was out of breath. He fell back exhausted, and, without conscious action of his will, the fatal sentence passed through his brain, "Let Him go if He will."

That the "selling Christ" was a bargain in which he was to lose all and receive nothing is evident from the form in which he was overcome. Yet, if he had gained a fortune by fraud or forgery, he could not have been more certain that he had destroyed himself.

Satan had won the battle, and he, "as a bird shot from a tree, had fallen into guilt and despair." He got out of bed, "and went moping into the fields," where he wandered for two hours, "as a man bereft of life, and now past recovering," "bound over to eternal punishment." He shrank under the hedges, "in guilt and sorrow, bemoaning the hardness of his fate." In vain the words now came back that had so comforted him, "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." They had no application to him. He had acquired his birthright, but, like Esau, he had sold it, and could not any more find place for repentance. True, it was said that "all manner of sins and blasphemies should be forgiven unto men," but only such sins and blasphemies as had been committed in the

natural state. Bunyan had received grace, and, after receiving it, had sinned against the Holy Ghost.

It was done, and nothing could undo it. David had received grace, and had committed murder and adultery after it. But murder and adultery, bad as they might be, were only transgressions of the law of Moses. Bunyan had sinned against the Mediator himself; "he had sold his Saviour." One sin, and only one, there was which could not be pardoned, and he had been guilty of it. Peter had sinned against grace, and even after he had been warned. Peter, however, had but denied his Master. Bunyan had sold him. He was no David or Peter, he was Judas. It was very hard. Others naturally as bad as he had been saved. Why had he been picked out to be made a Son of Perdition? A Judas! Was there any point in which he was better than Judas? Judas had sinned with deliberate purpose: he "in a fearful hurry," and "against prayer and striving." But there might be more ways than one of committing the unpardonable sin, and there might be degrees of it. It was a dreadful condition. The old doubts came back.

"I was now ashamed," he says, "that I should be like such an ugly man as Judas. I thought how loathsome I should be to all the saints at the Day of Judgment. I was tempted to content myself by receiving some false opinion, as that there should be no such thing as the Day of Judgment, that we should not rise again, that sin was no such grievous thing, the tempter suggesting that if these things should be indeed true, yet to believe otherwise would yield me ease for the present. If I must perish, I need not torment myself beforehand."

Judas! Judas! was now for ever before his eyes. So identified he was with Judas that he felt at times as if his breastbone was bursting. A mark like Cain's was on him. In vain he searched again through the catalogue of pardoned sinners. Manasseh had consulted wizards and familiar spirits. Manasseh had burnt his children in the fire to devils. He had found mercy; but, alas! Manasseh's sins had nothing of the nature of selling the Saviour. To have sold the Saviour "was a sin bigger than the sins of a country, of a kingdom, or of the whole world—not all of them together could equal it."

His brain was overstrained, it will be said. Very likely. It is to be remembered, however, who and what he was, and that he had overstrained it in his eagerness to learn what he conceived his Maker to wish him to be—a form of anxiety not common in this world. The cure was as remarkable as the disorder. One day he was "in a good man's shop," still "afflicting himself with self-abhorrence," when something seemed to rush in through an open window, and he heard a voice saying, "Didst ever refuse to be justified by the blood of Christ?" Bunyan shared the belief of his time. He took the system of things as the Bible represented it; but his strong common sense put him on his guard against being easily credulous. He thought at the time that the voice was super-

natural. After twenty years he said, modestly, that he "could not make a judgment of it." The effect, any way, was as if an angel had come to him and had told him that there was still hope. Hapless as his condition was, he might still pray for mercy, and might possibly find it. He tried to pray, and found it very hard. The devil whispered again that God was tired of him; God wanted to be rid of him and his importunities, and had, therefore, allowed him to commit this particular sin that he might hear no more of him. He remembered Esau, and thought that this might be too true: "the saying about Esau was a flaming sword barring the way of the tree of life to him." Still he would not give in. "I can but die," he said to himself; "and if it must be so, it shall be said that such an one died at the feet of Christ in prayer."

He was torturing himself with illusions. Most of the saints in the Catholic Calendar have done the same. The most remorseless philosopher can hardly refuse a certain admiration for this poor uneducated village lad struggling so bravely in the theological spider's web. The "Professors" could not comfort him, having never experienced similar distresses in their own persons. He consulted "an Antient Christian," telling him that he feared that he had sinned against the Holy Ghost. The Antient Christian answered gravely that he thought so too. The devil having him at advantage, began to be witty with him. The devil suggested that, as he had offended the second or third Person of the Trinity, he had better pray the Father to mediate for him with Christ and the Holy Spirit. Then the devil took another turn. Christ, he said, was really sorry for Bunyan, but his case was beyond remedy. Bunyan's sin was so peculiar, that it was not of the nature of those for which He had bled and died, and had not, therefore, been laid to His charge. To justify Bunyan he must come down and die again, and that was not to be thought of. "Oh!" exclaimed the unfortunate victim, "the unthought-of imaginations, frights, fears, and terrors that are effected by a thorough application of guilt (to a spirit) that is yielded to desperation. This is the man that hath his dwelling among the tombs."

Sitting in this humour on a settle in the street at Bedford, he was pondering over his fearful state. The sun in heaven seemed to grudge its light to him. "The stones in the street and the tiles on the houses did bend themselves against him." Each crisis in Bunyan's mind is always framed in the picture of some spot where it occurred. He was crying, "in the bitterness of his soul, How can God comfort such a wretch as I am?" As before, in the shop, a voice came in answer, "This sin is not unto death." The first voice had brought him hope, which was almost extinguished; the second was a message of life. The night was gone, and it was daylight. He had come to the end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and the spectres and the hobgoblins which had jibbered at him suddenly all vanished. A moment before he had supposed that he was out of reach of pardon—that he had no right to pray, no right to repent, or, at least, that neither prayer nor repentance

could profit him. If his sin was not to death, then he was on the same ground as other sinners. If they might pray, he might pray, and might look to be forgiven on the same terms. He still saw that his "selling Christ" had been "most barbarous," but despair was followed by an extravagance, no less unbounded, of gratitude, when he felt that Christ would pardon even this.

"Love and affection for Christ," he says, "did work at this time such a strong and hot desire of revengement upon myself for the abuse I had done to Him, that, to speak as then I thought, had I had a thousand gallons of blood in my veins, I could freely have spilt it all at the command of my Lord and Saviour. The tempter told me it was vain to pray. Yet, thought I, I will pray. But, said the tempter, your sin is unpardonable. Well, said I, I will pray. It is no boot, said he. Yet, said I, I will pray; so I went to prayer, and I uttered words to this effect: Lord, Satan tells me that neither Thy mercy nor Christ's blood is sufficient to save my soul. Lord, shall I honour Thee most by believing that Thou wilt and canst, or him, by believing that Thou neither wilt nor canst? Lord, I would fain honour Thee by believing that Thou wilt and canst. As I was there before the Lord, the Scripture came, Oh! man, great is thy faith, even as if one had clapped me on the back."

The waves had not wholly subsided; but we need not follow the undulations any farther. It is enough that after a "conviction of sin," considerably deeper than most people find necessary for themselves, Bunyan had come to realise what was meant by salvation in Christ, according to the received creed of the contemporary Protestant world. The intensity of his emotions arose only from the completeness with which he believed it. Man had sinned, and by sin was made a servant of the devil. His redemption was a personal act of the Saviour towards each individual sinner. In the Atonement Christ had before him each separate person whom he designed to save, blotting out his offences, however heinous they might be, and recording in place of them his own perfect obedience. Each reconciled sinner in return regarded Christ's sufferings as undergone immediately for himself, and gratitude for that great deliverance enabled and obliged him to devote his strength and soul thenceforward to God's service. In the seventeenth century, all earnest English Protestants held this belief. In the nineteenth century, most of us repeat the phrases of this belief, and pretend to hold it. We think we hold it. We are growing more cautious, perhaps, with our definitions. We suspect that there may be mysteries in God's nature and methods which we cannot fully explain. The outlines of "the scheme of salvation" are growing indistinct; and we see it through a gathering mist. Yet the essence of it will remain true, whether we recognise it or not. While man remains man he will do things which he ought not to do. He will leave undone things which he ought to do. To will, may be present with him; but how to perform what he wills, he will never fully know, and he will still hate

"the body of death" which he feels clinging to him. He will try to do better. When he falls, he will struggle to his feet again. He will climb and climb on the hill-side, though he never reaches the top, and knows that he can never reach it. His life will be a failure, which he will not dare to offer as a fit account of himself, or as worth a serious regard. Yet he will still hope that he will not be wholly cast away when, after his sleep in death, he wakes again.

Now, says Bunyan, there remained only the hinder part of the tempest. Heavenly voices continued to encourage him. "As I was passing in the field," he goes on, "I heard the sentence, thy righteousness is in heaven; and methought I saw, with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand, there I say, as my righteousness, so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me He wants my righteousness, for that was just before Him. Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed. I was loosed from my affliction and irons; my temptations also fled away, so that from that time those dreadful Scriptures of God left off to trouble me. Now went I home rejoicing for the grace and love of God. Christ of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. I now lived very sweetly at peace with God through Christ. Oh! methought, Christ! Christ! There was nothing but Christ before my eyes. I was not now only looking upon this and the other benefits of Christ apart, as of His blood, burial, and resurrection, but considered Him as a whole Christ. All those graces that were now green in me were yet but like those cracked groats and fourpence half-pennies which rich men carry in their purses, while their gold is in their trunks at home. Oh! I saw my gold was in my trunk at home in Christ my Lord and Saviour. The Lord led me into the mystery of union with the Son of God, that I was joined to Him, that I was flesh of His flesh. If He and I were one, His righteousness was mine, His merits mine, His victory mine. Now I could see myself in heaven and earth at once; in heaven by my Christ, though on earth by my body and person. Christ was that common and public person in whom the whole body of His elect are always to be considered and reckoned. We fulfilled the law by Him, died by Him, rose from the dead by Him, got the victory over sin and death, the devil and hell by Him. I had cause to say Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary."

CHAPTER IV.

CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

THE Pilgrim falls into the hands of Giant Despair because he has himself first strayed into Byepath Meadow. Bunyan found an explanation of his last convulsion in an act of unbelief, on which, on looking back, he perceived that he had been guilty. He had been delivered out of his first temptation. He had not been sufficiently on his guard against temptations that might come in the future; nay, he had himself tempted God. His wife had been overtaken by a premature confinement, and was suffering acutely. It was at the time when Bunyan was exercised with questions about the truth of religion altogether. As the poor woman lay crying at his side, he had said, mentally, "Lord, if Thou wilt now remove this sad affliction from my wife, and cause that she be troubled no more therewith this night, then I shall know that thou canst discern the more secret thoughts of the heart." In a moment the pain ceased, and she fell into a sleep which lasted till morning. Bunyan, though surprised at the time, forgot what had happened, till it rushed back upon his memory, when he had committed himself by a similar mental assent to selling Christ. He remembered the proof which had been given to him that God could and did discern his thoughts. God had discerned this second thought also, and in punishing him for it had punished him at the same time for the doubt which he had allowed himself to feel. "I should have believed his word," he said, "and not have put an 'if' upon the all-seeingness of God."

The suffering was over now, and he felt that it had been infinitely beneficial to him. He understood better the glory of God and of his Son. The Scriptures had opened their secrets to him, and he had seen them to be in very truth the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. Never so clearly as after this "temptation" had he perceived "the heights of grace, and love, and mercy." Two or three times "he had such strange apprehensions of the grace of God as had amazed him." The impression was so overpowering that if it had continued long "it would have rendered him incapable for business." He joined his friend Mr. Gifford's church. He was baptised in the Ouse, and became a professed member of the Baptist congregation. Soon after, his mental conflict was entirely over, and he had two quiet years of peace. Before a man can use his powers to any purpose, he must arrive at some conviction in which his intellect can acquiesce. "Calm yourself," says Jean

Paul; "it is your first necessity. Be a stoic, if nothing else will serve." Bunyan had not been driven into stoicism. He was now restored to the possession of his faculties, and his remarkable ability was not long in showing itself.

The first consequence of his mental troubles was an illness. He had a cough which threatened to turn into consumption. He thought it was all over with him, and he was fixing his eyes "on the heavenly Jerusalem and the innumerable company of angels;" but the danger passed off, and he became well and strong in mind and body. Notwithstanding his various miseries, he had not neglected his business, and had, indeed, been specially successful. By the time that he was twenty-five years old he was in a position considerably superior to that in which he was born. "God," says a contemporary biographer, "had increased his stores so that he lived in great credit among his neighbours." On May 13, 1653, Bedfordshire sent an address to Cromwell approving the dismissal of the Long Parliament, recognising Oliver himself as the Lord's instrument, and recommending the county magistrates as fit persons to serve in the Assembly which was to take its place. Among thirty-six names attached to this document appear those of Gifford and Bunyan. This speaks for itself: he must have been at least a householder and a person of consideration. It was not, however, as a prosperous brazier that Bunyan was to make his way. He had a gift of speech, which, in the democratic congregation to which he belonged, could not long remain hid. Young as he was, he had sounded the depths of spiritual experience. Like Dante, he had been in hell—the popular hell of English Puritanism—and in 1655, he was called upon to take part in the "ministry." He was modest, humble, shrinking. The minister when he preached was, according to the theory, an instrument uttering the words not of himself but of the Holy Spirit. A man like Bunyan, who really believed this, might well be alarmed. After earnest entreaty, however, "he made experiment of his powers" in private, and it was at once evident that, with the thing which these people meant by inspiration, he was abundantly supplied. No such preacher to the uneducated English masses was to be found within the four seas. He says that he had no desire of vainglory; no one who has studied his character can suppose that he had. He was a man of natural genius, who believed the Protestant form of Christianity to be completely true. He knew nothing of philosophy, nothing of history. nothing of literature. The doubts to which he acknowledged being without their natural food, had never presented themselves in a form which would have compelled him to submit to remain uncertain. Doubt, as he had felt it, was a direct enemy of morality and purity, and as such he had fought with it and conquered it. Protestant Christianity was true. All mankind were perishing unless they saw it to be true. This was his message; a message —supposing him to have been right—of an importance so immeasurable that all else was nothing. He was still "afflicted with the

fiery darts of the devil," but he saw that he must not bury his abilities. "In fear and trembling," therefore, he set himself to the work, and "did according to his power preach the Gospel that God had shewn him."

"The Lord led him to begin where his Word began—with sinners. This part of my work," he says, "I fulfilled with a great sense, for the terrors of the law and guilt for my transgressions lay heavy on my conscience. I preached what I felt. I had been sent to my hearers as from the dead. I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains, and carried that fire in my own conscience that I persuaded them to beware of. I have gone full of guilt and terror to the pulpit door; God carried me on with a strong hand, for neither guilt nor hell could take me off."

Many of Bunyan's addresses remain in the form of theological treatises, and, that I may not have to return to the subject, I shall give some account of them. His doctrine was the doctrine of the best and strongest minds in Europe. It had been believed by Luther, it had been believed by Knox. It was believed at that moment by Oliver Cromwell as completely as by Bunyan himself. It was believed, so far as such a person could be said to believe anything, by the all-accomplished Leibnitz himself. Few educated people use the language of it now. In them it was a fire from heaven shining like a sun in a dark world. With us the fire has gone out; in the place of it we have but smoke and ashes; and the Evangelical mind, in search of "something deeper and truer than satisfied the last century," is turning back to Catholic verities. What Bunyan had to say may be less than the whole truth; we shall scarcely find the still missing part of it in lines of thought which we have outgrown.

Bunyan preached wherever opportunity served—in woods, in barns, on village greens, or in town chapels. The substance of his sermons he revised and published. He began, as he said, with sinners, explaining the condition of men in the world. They were under the law, or they were under grace. Every person that came into the world was born under the law, and as such was bound, under pain of eternal damnation, to fulfil completely and continually every one of the Ten Commandments. The Bible said plainly, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The Ten Commandments extended into many more, and to fail in a single one was as fatal as to break them all. A man might go on for a long time, for sixty years perhaps, without falling. Bunyan does not mean that anyone really could do all this, but he assumes the possibility; yet he says if the man slipped once before he died, he would eternally perish. The law does not refer to words and actions only, but to thoughts and feelings. It followed a man in his prayers, and detected a wandering thought. It allowed no repentance to those who lived and died under it. If it was asked whether God could not pardon, as earthly judges pardon criminals, the answer was that it is not the

law which is merciful to the earthly offender, but the magistrate. The law is an eternal principle. The magistrate may forgive a man without exacting satisfaction. The law knows no forgiveness. It can be as little changed as an axiom of mathematics. Repentance cannot undo the past. Let a man leave his sins and live as purely as an angel all the rest of his life, his old faults remain in the account against him, and his state is as bad as ever it was. God's justice once offended knows not pity or compassion, but runs on the offender like a lion and throws him into prison, there to lie to all eternity unless infinite satisfaction be given to it. And that satisfaction no son of Adam could possibly make.

This conception of divine justice, not as a sentence of a judge, but as the action of an eternal law, is identical with Spinoza's. That every act involves consequences which cannot be separated from it, and may continue operative to eternity, is a philosophical position which is now generally admitted. Combined with the traditionary notions of a future judgment and punishment in hell, the recognition that there was a law in the case, and that the law could not be broken, led to the frightful inference that each individual was liable to be kept alive and tortured through all eternity. And this, in fact, was the fate really in store for every human creature unless some extraordinary remedy could be found. Bunyan would allow no merit to anyone. He would not have it supposed that only the profane or grossly wicked were in danger from the law. "A man," he says, "may be turned from a vain, loose, open, profane conversation and sinning against the law, to a holy, righteous, life, and yet be under the same state and as sure to be damned as the others that are more profane and loose." The natural man might think it strange, but the language of the curse was not to be mistaken. Cursed is every one who has failed to fulfil the whole law. There was not a person in the whole world who had not himself sinned in early life. All had sinned in Adam also, and St. Paul had said in consequence, "'There is none that doeth good, no not one!' The law was given not that we might be saved by obeying it, but that we might know the holiness of God and our own vileness, and that we might understand that we should not be damned for nothing. God would have no quarrelling at His just condemning of us at that day."

This is Bunyan's notion of the position in which we all naturally stand in this world, and from which the substitution of Christ's perfect fulfilment of the law alone rescues us. It is calculated, no doubt, to impress on us a profound horror of moral evil when the penalty attached to it is so fearful. But it is dangerous to introduce into religion metaphysical conceptions of "law." The cord cracks that is strained too tightly; and it is only for brief periods of high spiritual tension that a theology so merciless can sustain itself. No one with a conscience in him will think of claiming any merit for himself. But we know also that there are degrees of demerit, and, theory or no theory, we fall back on the first verse of the English Liturgy, as containing a more endurable account of things.

For this reason, among others, Bunyan disliked the Liturgy. He thought the doctrine of it false, and he objected to a Liturgy on principle. He has a sermon on Prayer, in which he insists that to be worth anything prayer must be the expression of an inward feeling; and that people cannot feel in lines laid down for them. Forms of prayer he thought especially mischievous to children, as accustoming them to use words to which they attach no meaning.

"My judgment," he says, "is that men go the wrong way to learn their children to pray. It seems to me a better way for people to tell their children betimes what cursed creatures they are, how they are under the wrath of God by reason of original and actual sin; also to tell them the nature of God's wrath and the duration of misery, which, if they would conscientiously do, they would sooner learn their children to pray than they do. The way that men learn to pray is by conviction of sin, and this is the way to make our 'sweet babes' do so too."

"Sweet babes" is unworthy of Bunyan. There is little sweetness in a state of things so stern as he conceives. He might have considered, too, that there was a danger of making children unreal in another and worse sense by teaching them doctrines which neither child nor man can comprehend. It may be true that a single sin may consign me to everlasting hell, but I cannot be made to acknowledge the justice of it. "Wrath of God" and such expressions are out of place when we are brought into the presence of metaphysical laws. Wrath corresponds to free-will misused. It is senseless and extravagant when pronounced against actions which men cannot help, when the faulty action is the necessary consequence of their nature, and the penalty the necessary consequence of the action.

The same confusion of thought lies in the treatment of the kindred subjects of Free-will, Election, and Reprobation. The logic must be maintained, and God's moral attributes simultaneously vindicated. Bunyan argues about it as ingeniously as Leibnitz himself. Those who suppose that specific guilt attaches to particular acts, that all men are put into the world free to keep the Commandments or to break them, that they are equally able to do one as to do the other, and are, therefore, proper objects of punishment, hold an opinion which is consistent in itself, but is in entire contradiction with facts. Children are not as able to control their inclinations as grown men, and one man is not as able to control himself as another. Some have no difficulty from the first, and are constitutionally good; some are constitutionally weak, or have incurable propensities for evil. Some are brought up with care and insight: others seem never to have any chance at all. So evident is this, that impartial thinkers have questioned the reality of human guilt in the sense in which it is generally understood. Even Butler allows that if we look too curiously we may have a difficulty in finding where it lies. And here, if anywhere, there is a real natural truth in the doctrine of Election, independent of the merit of those who are so happy as to find favour. Bunyan, how-

ever, reverses the inference. He will have all guilty together, those who do well, and those who do ill. Even the elect are in themselves as badly off as the reprobate, and are equally included under sin. Those who are saved are saved for Christ's merits and not for their own.

Men of calmer temperament accept facts as they find them. They are too conscious of their ignorance to insist on explaining problems which are beyond their reach. Bunyan lived in an age of intense religious excitement, when the strongest minds were exercising themselves on those questions. It is noticeable that the most effective intellects inclined to necessitarian conclusions: some in the shape of Calvinism, some in the corresponding philosophic form of Spinozism. From both alike there came an absolute submission to the decrees of God, and a passionate devotion to his service; while the morality of Free-will is cold and calculating. Appeals to a sense of duty do not reach beyond the understanding. The enthusiasm which will stir men's hearts and give them a real power of resisting temptation must be nourished on more invigorating food.

But I need dwell no more on a subject which is unsuited for these pages.

The object of Bunyan, like that of Luther, like that of all great spiritual teachers, was to bring his wandering fellow-mortals into obedience to the commandments, even while he insisted on the worthlessness of it. He sounded the strings to others which had sounded loudest in himself. When he passed from mysticism into matters of ordinary life, he showed the same practical good sense which distinguishes the chief of all this order of thinkers—St. Paul. There is a sermon of Bunyan's on Christian behaviour, on the duties of parents to children, and masters to servants, which might be studied with as much advantage in English households as *The Pilgrim's Progress* itself. To fathers he says, "Take heed that the misdeeds for which thou correctest thy children be not learned them by thee. Many children learn that wickedness of their parents, for which they beat and chastise them. Take heed that thou smile not upon them to encourage them in small faults, lest that thy carriage to them be an encouragement to them to commit greater faults. Take heed that thou use not unsavoury and unseemly words in thy chastising of them, as railing, miscalling, and the like—this is devilish. Take heed that thou do not use them to many chiding words and threatenings, mixed with lightness and laughter. This will harden."

And again: "I tell you that if parents carry it lovingly towards their children, mixing their mercies with loving rebukes, and their loving rebukes with fatherly and motherly compassions, they are more likely to save their children than by being churlish and severe to them. Even if these things do not save them, if their mercy do them no good, yet it will greatly ease them at the day of death to consider, I have done by love as much as I could to save and deliver my child from hell."

Whole volumes on education have said less, or less to the purpose, than these simple words. Unfortunately, parents do not read Bunyan. He is left to children.

Similarly, he says to masters:—

"It is thy duty so to behave thyself to thy servant that thy service may not only be for thy good, but for the good of thy servant, and that in body and soul. Deal with him as to admonition as with thy children. Take heed thou do not turn thy servants into slaves by overcharging them in thy work with thy greediness. Take heed thou carry not thyself to thy servant as he of whom it is said, 'He is such a man of Belial that his servants cannot speak to him.' The Apostle bids you forbear to threaten them, because you also have a Master in Heaven. Masters, give your servants that which is just, just labour and just wages. Servants that are truly godly care not how cheap they serve their masters, provided they may get into godly families, or where they may be convenient for the Word. But if a master or mistress takes this opportunity to make a prey of their servants, it is abominable. I have heard poor servants say that in some carnal families they have had more liberty to God's things and more fairness of dealing than among many professors. Such masters make religion to stink before the inhabitants of the land."

Bunyan was generally charitable in his judgment upon others. If there was any exception, it was of professors who discredited their calling by conceit and worldliness.

"No sin," he says, "reigneth more in the world than pride among professors. The thing is too apparent for any man to deny. We may and do see pride display itself in the apparel and carriage of professors almost as much as among any in the land. I have seen church members so decked and bedaubed with their fangles and toys that, when they have been at worship, I have wondered with what faces such painted persons could sit in the place where they were without swooning. I once talked with a maid, by way of reproof for her fond and gaudy garment; she told me the tailor would make it so. Poor proud girl, she gave orders to the tailor to make it so."

I will give one more extract from Bunyan's pastoral addresses. It belongs to a later period in his ministry, when the law had for a time, remade Dissent into a crime; but it will throw light on the part of his story which we are now approaching, and it is in every way very characteristic of him. He is speaking to sufferers under persecution. He says to them:—

"Take heed of being offended with magistrates, because by their statutes they may cross thy inclinations. It is given to them to bear the sword, and a command is to thee, if thy heart cannot acquiesce with all things, with meekness and patience to suffer. Discontent in the mind sometimes puts discontent into the mouth; and discontent in the mouth doth sometimes also put a halter about thy neck. For as a man speaking a word in jest may for that be hanged in earnest, so he that speaks in discontent may die for it

in sober sadness. Above all, get thy conscience possessed more and more with this, that the magistrate is God's ordinance, and is ordered of God as such; that he is the minister of God to thee for good, and that it is thy duty to fear him and to pray for him; to give thanks to God for him and be subject to him; as both Paul and Peter admonish us; and that not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake. For all other arguments come short of binding the soul when this argument is wanting, until we believe that of God we are bound thereto.

"I apeak not these things as knowing any that are disaffected to the government, for I love to be alone, if not with godly man, in things that are convenient. I speak to show my loyalty to the king, and my love to my fellow-subjects, and my desire that all Chrisians shall walk in the ways of peace and truth."

CHAPTER V.

ARREST AND TRIAL.

BUNYAN'S preaching enterprise became an extraordinary success. All the Midland Counties heard of his fame, and demanded to hear him. He had been Deacon under Gifford at the Bedford Church; he was in such request as a preacher, that, in 1657, he was released from his duties there as unable to attend to them. Sects was springing up all over England as weeds in a hot-bed. He was soon in controversy; controversy with Church of England people; controversy with the Ranters, who believed Christ to be a myth; controversy with the Quakers, who, at their outset, disbelieved in his Divinity and in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Envy at his rapidly acquired reputation brought him baser enemies. He was called a witch, a Jesuit, a highwayman. It was reported that he had "his misses," that he had two wives, etc. "My foes have missed their mark in this," he said, with honest warmth: "I am not the man. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged by the neck, John Bunyan, the object of their envy, would be still alive and well. I know not whether there be such a thing as a woman breathing under the cope of the whole heavens but by their apparel, their children, or common fame, except my wife."

But a more serious trial was now before him. Cromwell passed away. The Protectorate came to an end. England decided that it had had enough of Puritans and republicans, and would give the Stuarts and the Established Church another trial. A necessary consequence was the revival of the Act of Uniformity. The Independents were not meek like the Baptists, using no weapons to oppose what they disapproved but passive resistance. The same motives which had determined the original constitution of a Church combining the characters of Protestant and Catholic, instead of leaving religion free, were even more powerful at the Restoration than they had been at the accession of Elizabeth. Before toleration is possible, men must have learnt to tolerate toleration itself; and in times of violent convictions, toleration is looked on as indifference, and indifference as Atheism in disguise. Catholics and Protestants, Churchmen and Dissenters, regarded one another as enemies of God and the State, with whom no peace was possible. Toleration had been tried by the Valois princes in France. Church and chapel had been the rendezvous of armed fanatics. The preachers blew the war-trumpet, and every town and village had

been the scene of furious conflicts, which culminated in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. The same result would have followed in England if the same experiment had been ventured. The different communities were forbidden to have their separate places of worship, and services were contrived which moderate men of all sorts could use and interpret after their own convictions. The instrument required to be delicately handled. It succeeded tolerably as long as Elizabeth lived. When Elizabeth died, the balance was no longer fairly kept. The High-Church party obtained the ascendency, and abused their power. Tyranny brought revolution, and the Catholic element in turn disappeared. The Bishops were displaced by Presbyterian elders. The Presbyterian elders became in turn "hireling wolves," "old priest" written in new characters. Cromwell had left conscience free to Protestants. But even he had refused equal liberty to Catholics and Episcopalians. He was gone too, and Church and King were back again. How were they to stand? The stern. resolute men, to whom the Commonwealth had been the establishment of God's kingdom upon earth, were as little inclined to keep terms with Antichrist as the Church people had been inclined to keep terms with Cromwell. To have allowed them to meet openly in their conventicles would have been to make over the whole of England to them as a seed-bed in which to plant sedition. It was pardonable, it was even necessary, for Charles II. and his advisers to fall back upon Elizabeth's principles, at least as long as the ashes were still glowing. Indulgence had to be postponed till cooler times. With the Fifth Monarchy men abroad, every chapel, except those of the Baptists, would have been a magazine of explosives.

Under the 35th of Elizabeth, Nonconformists refusing to attend worship in the parish churches were to be imprisoned till they made their submission. Three months were allowed them to consider. If at the end of that time they were still obstinate, they were to be banished the realm; and if they subsequently returned to England without permission from the Crown, they were liable to execution as felons. This Act had fallen with the Long Parliament, but at the Restoration it was held to have revived and to be still in force. The parish churches were cleared of their unordained ministers. The Dissenters' chapels were closed. The people were required by proclamation to be present on Sundays in their proper place. So the majority of the nation had decided. If they had wished for religious liberty they would not have restored the Stuarts, or they would have insisted on conditions, and would have seen that they were observed.

Venner's plot showed the reality of the danger and justified the precaution.

The Baptists and Quakers might have been trusted to discourage violence, but it was impossible to distinguish among the various sects, whose tenets were unknown and even unsettled. The great body of Cromwell's spiritual supporters believed that armed resistance to a government which they disapproved was not only lawful, but was enjoined.

Thus, no sooner was Charles II. on the throne than the Nonconformists found themselves again under bondage. Their separate meetings were prohibited, and they were not only forbidden to worship in their own fashion, but they had to attend church, under penalties. The Bedford Baptists refused to obey. Their meeting-house in the town was shut up, but they continued to assemble in woods and outhouses; Bunyan preaching to them as before, and going to the place in disguise. Informers were soon upon his track. The magistrates had received orders to be vigilant. Bunyan was the most prominent Dissenter in the neighbourhood. He was too sensible to court martyrdom. He had intended to leave the town till more quiet times, and had arranged to meet a few of his people once more to give them a parting address. It was November 12, 1660. The place agreed on was a house in the village of Samsell, near Harlington. Notice of his intention was privately conveyed to Mr. Wingate, a magistrate in the adjoining district. The constables were set to watch the house, and were directed to bring Bunyan before him. Some member of the congregation heard of it. Bunyan was warned, and was advised to stay at home that night, or else to conceal himself. His departure had been already arranged; but when he learnt that a warrant was actually out against him, he thought that he was bound to stay and face the danger. He was the first Nonconformist who had been marked for arrest. If he flinched after he had been singled out by name, the whole body of his congregation would be discouraged. Go to church he would not, or promise to go to church; but he was willing to suffer whatever punishment the law might order. Thus, at the time and place which had been agreed on, he was in the room at Samsell, with his Bible in his hand, and was about to begin his address, when the constables entered and arrested him. He made no resistance. He desired only to be allowed to say a few words, which the constables permitted. He then prepared to go with them. He was not treated with any roughness. It was too late to take him that night before the magistrate. His friends undertook for his appearance when he should be required, and he went home with them. The constables came for him again on the following afternoon.

Mr. Wingate, when the information was first brought to him, supposed that he had fallen on a nest of Fifth Monarchy men. He enquired, when Bunyan was brought in, how many arms had been found at the meeting. When he learnt that there were no arms, and that it had no political character whatever, he evidently thought it was a matter of no consequence. He told Bunyan that he had been breaking the law, and asked him why he could not attend to his business. Bunyan said that his object in teaching was merely to persuade people to give up their sins. He could do that and attend to his business also. Wingate answered that the law must be obeyed. He must commit Bunyan for trial at the Quarter Sessions; but he would take bail for him, if his securities would

engage that he would not preach again meanwhile. Bunyan refused to be bailed on any such terms. Preach he would and must, and the recognizances would be forfeited. After such an answer, Wingate could only send him to gaol; he could not help himself. The committal was made out, and Bunyan was being taken away, when two of his friends met him, who were acquainted with Wingate, and they begged the constable to wait. They went in to the magistrate. They told him who and what Bunyan was. The magistrate had not the least desire to be hard, and it was agreed that if he would himself give some general promise of a vague kind he might be let go altogether. Bunyan was called back. Another magistrate who knew him had by this time joined Wingate. They both said that they were reluctant to send him to prison. If he would promise them that he would not call the people together any more, he might go home.

They had purposely chosen a form of words which would mean as little as possible. But Bunyan would not accept an evasion. He said that he would not force the people to come together, but if he was in a place where the people were met, he should certainly speak to them. The magistrate repeated that the meetings were unlawful. They would be satisfied if Bunyan would simply promise that he would not call such meetings. It was as plain as possible that they wished to dismiss the case, and they were thrusting words into his mouth which he could use without a mental reservation; but he persisted that there were many ways in which a meeting might be called; if people came together to hear him, knowing that he would speak, he might be said to have called them together.

Remonstrances and entreaties were equally useless, and, with extreme unwillingness, they committed him to Bedford gaol to wait for the sessions.

It is not for us to say that Bunyan was too precise. He was himself the best judge of what his conscience and his situation required. To himself, at any rate, his trial was at the moment most severe. He had been left a widower a year or two before, with four young children, one of them blind. He had lately married a second time. His wife was pregnant. The agitation at her husband's arrest brought on premature labour, and she was lying in his house in great danger. He was an affectionate man, and the separation at such a time was peculiarly distressing. After some weeks the Quarter Sessions came on. Bunyan was indicted under the usual form, that he, "being a person of such and such condition, had, since such a time, devilishly and pertinaciously abstained from coming to church to hear Divine service, and was a common upholder of unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our Sovereign Lord the King."

There seems to have been a wish to avoid giving him a formal trial. He was not required to plead, and it may have been thought that he had been punished sufficiently. He was asked why he did

not go to church? He said that the Prayer-book was made by man; he was ordered in the Bible to pray with the spirit and the understanding, not with the spirit and the Prayer-book. The magistrates, referring to another Act of Parliament, cautioned Bunyan against finding fault with the Prayer-book, or he would bring himself into further trouble. Justice Keelin, who presided, said (so Bunyan declares, and it has been the standing jest of his biographers ever since) that the Prayer-book had been in use ever since the Apostles' time. Perhaps the words were that parts of it had been in use (the Apostles' Creed, for instance), and thus they would have been strictly true. However this might be, they told him kindly, as Mr. Wingate had done, that it would be better for him if he would keep to his proper work. The law had prohibited conventicles. He might teach, if he pleased, of his own family and among his friends. He must not call large numbers of people together. He was as impracticable as before, and the magistrates, being but unregenerate mortals, may be pardoned if they found him provoking. If, he said, it was lawful for him to do good to a few, it must be equally lawful to do good to many. He had a gift, which he was bound to use. If it was sinful for men to meet together to exhort one another to follow Christ, he should sin still.

He was compelling the Court to punish him, whether they wished it or not. He describes the scene as if the choice had rested with the magistrates to convict him or to let him go. If he was bound to do his duty, they were equally bound to do theirs. They took his answers as a plea of guilty to the indictment, and Justice Keelin, who was chairman, pronounced his sentence in the terms of the Act. He was to go to prison for three months; if, at the end of three months, he still refused to conform, he was to be transported; and if he came back without license he would be hanged. Bunyan merely answered, "If I were out of prison to-day, I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow." More might have followed, but the gaoler led him away.

There were three gaols in Bedford, and no evidence has been found to show in which of the three Bunyan was confined. Two of them, the county gaol and the town gaol, were large, roomy buildings. Tradition has chosen the third, a small lock-up, fourteen feet square, which stood over the river between the central arches of the old bridge; and as it appears from the story that he had at times fifty or sixty fellow-prisoners, and as he admits himself that he was treated at first with exceptional kindness, it may be inferred that tradition, in selecting the prison on the bridge, was merely desiring to exhibit the sufferings of the Nonconformist martyr in a sensational form, and that he was never in this prison at all. When it was pulled down in 1811, a gold ring was found in the rubbish, with the initials "J. B." upon it. This is one of the "trifles light as air" which carry conviction to the "jealous" only, and is too slight a foundation on which to assert a fact so inherently improbable.

When the three months were over, the course of law would

have brought him again to the bar, when he would have had to choose between conformity and exile. There was still the same desire to avoid extremities, and as the day approached, the clerk of the peace was sent to persuade him into some kind of compliance. Various insurrections had broken out since his arrest, and must have shown him, if he could have reflected, that there was real reason for the temporary enforcement of the Act. He was not asked to give up preaching. He was asked only to give up public preaching. It was well known that he had no disposition to rebellion. Even the going to church was not insisted on. The clerk of the peace told him that he might "exhort his neighbours in private discourse," if only he would not bring the people together in numbers, which the magistrates would be bound to notice. In this way he might continue his usefulness, and would not be interfered with.

Bunyan knew his own freedom from seditious intentions. He would not see that the magistrates could not suspend the law and make an exception in his favour. They were going already to the utmost limit of indulgence. But the more he disapproved of rebellion, the more punctilious he was in carrying out resistance of another kind which he held to be legitimate. He was a representative person, and he thought that in yielding he would hurt the cause of religious liberty. "The law," he said, "had provided two ways of obeying—one to obey actively, and if he could not in conscience obey actively, then to suffer whatever penalty was inflicted on him."

The clerk of the peace could produce no effect. Bunyan rather looked on him as a false friend trying to entangle him. The three months elapsed, and the magistrates had to determine what was to be done. If Bunyan was brought before them, they must exile him. His case was passed over and he was left in prison, where his wife and children were allowed to visit him daily. He did not understand the law or appreciate their forbearance. He exaggerated his danger. At the worst he could only have been sent to America, where he might have remained as long as he pleased. He feared that he might perhaps be hanged.

"I saw what was coming," he said, "and had two considerations especially on my heart—how to be able to endure, should my imprisonment be long and tedious, and how to be able to encounter death should that be my portion. I was made to see that if I would suffer rightly, I must pass sentence of death upon everything that can properly be called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyments all as dead to me, and myself as dead to them. Yet I was a man compassed with infirmities. The parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place (the prison in which he was writing) as the pulling of my flesh from my bones; and that not only because I am too, too fond of those great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the hardships, miseries, and wants my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken from them.

especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides. Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow on thee. But, yet, thought I, I must venture all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you. I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children. Yet, thought I, I must do it—I must do it. I had this for consideration, that if I should now venture all for God, I engaged God to take care of my concernments. Also, I had dread of the torments of hell, which I was sure they must partake of that for fear of the cross do shrink from their profession. I had this much upon my spirit, that my imprisonment might end in the gallows for aught I could tell. In the condition I now was in I was not fit to die, nor indeed did I think I could if I should be called to it. I feared I might show a weak heart, and give occasion to the enemy. This lay with great trouble on me, for methought I was ashamed to die with a pale face and tottering knees for such a cause as this. The things of God were kept out of my sight. The tempter followed me with, 'But whither must you go when you die? What will become of you? What evidence have you for heaven and glory, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified?' Thus was I tossed many weeks; but I felt it was for the Word and way of God that I was in this condition. God might give me comfort or not as He pleased. I was bound, but He was free—yea, it was my duty to stand to His Word, whether He would ever look upon me or no, or save me at the last. Wherefore, thought I, the point being thus, I am for going on and venturing my eternal state with Christ, whether I have comfort here or no. If God does not come in, thought I, I will leap off the ladder even blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come heaven, come hell. Now was my heart full of comfort."

The ladder was an imaginary ladder, but the resolution was a genuine manly one, such as lies in the bottom of all brave and honorable action. Other who have thought very differently from Bunyan about such matters have felt the same as he felt. Be true to yourself, whatever comes, even if damnation come. Better hell with an honest heart, than heaven with cowardice and insincerity. It was the more creditable to Bunyan, too, because the spectres and hobgoblins had begun occasionally to revisit him.

"Of all temptations I ever met with in my life," he says, "to question the being of God and the truth of His Gospel is the worst, and worst to be borne. When this temptation comes, it takes my girdle from me, and removes the foundation from under me. Though God has visited my soul with never so blessed a discovery of Himself, yet afterwards I have been in my spirit so filled with darkness, that I could not so much as once conceive what that God and that comfort was with which I had been refreshed."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEDFORD GAOL.

THE irregularities in the proceedings against Bunyan had perhaps been suggested by the anticipation of the general pardon which was expected in the following spring. At the coronation of Charles, April 23, 1661, an order was issued for the release of prisoners who were in gaol for any offences short of felony. Those who were waiting their trials were to be let go at once. Those convicted and under sentence might sue out a pardon under the Great Seal at any time within a year from the proclamation. Was Bunyan legally convicted or not? He had not pleaded directly to the indictment. No evidence had been heard against him. His trial had been a conversation between himself and the Court. The point had been raised by his friends. His wife had been in London to make interest for him, and a peer had presented a petition in Bunyan's behalf in the House of Lords. The judges had been directed to look again into the matter at the midsummer assizes. The high-sheriff was active in Bunyan's favor. The Judges Twisden, Chester, and no less a person than Sir Matthew Hale, appear to have concluded that his conviction was legal, that he could not be tried again, and that he must apply for pardon in the regular way. His wife, however, at the instance of the sheriff, obtained a hearing, and they listened courteously to what she had to say. When she had done, Mr. Justice Twisden put the natural question, whether, if her husband was released, he would refrain from preaching in public for the future. If he intended to repeat his offence immediately that he was at liberty, his liberty would only bring him into a worse position. The wife at once said that he dared not leave off preaching as long as he could speak. The judge asked if she thought her husband was to be allowed to do as he pleased. She said that he was a peaceable person, and wished only to be restored to a position in which he could maintain his family. They had four small children who could not help themselves, one of them being blind, and they had nothing to live upon as long as her husband was in prison but the charity of their friends. Hale remarked that she looked very young to have four chindren. "I am but mother-in-law to them," she said, "having not been married yet full two years. I was with child when my husband

was first apprehended, but being young, I being dismayed at the news fell in labour, and so continued for eight days. I was delivered, but my child died."

Hale was markedly kind. He told her that, as the conviction had been recorded, they could not set it a side. She might sue out a pardon if she pleased, or she might obtain "a writ or error," which would he simple and less expensive.

She left the court in tears—tears, however, which were not altogether tears of suffering innocence. "It was not so much," she said, "because they were so hardhearted against me and my husband, but to think what a sad account such poor creatures would have to give at the coming of the Lord." No doubt both Bunyan and she thought themselves cruelly injured, and they confounded the law with the administration of it. Persons better informed than they often choose to forget that judges are sworn to adminster the law which they find, and rail at them as if the sentences which they are obliged by their oaths to pass were their own personal acts.

A pardon, it cannot be too often said, would have been of no use to Bunyan, because he was determined to persevere in disobeying a law which he considered to be unjust. The most real kindness which could be shown to him was to leave him where he was. His imprisonment was intended to be little more than nominal. His gaoler, not certainly without the sanction of the sheriff, let him go where he pleased; once even so far as London. He used his liberty as he had declared that he would. "I followed my wonted course of preaching," he says, "taking all occasions that were put in my hand to visit the people of God." This was deliberate defiance. The authorities saw that he must be either punished in earnest, or the law would fall into contempt. He admitted that he expected to bê "roundly dealt with." His indulgences were withdrawn, and he was put into close confinement.

Sessions now followed sessions, and assizes, assizes. His detention was doubtless irregular, for by law he should have been sent beyond the seas. He petitioned to be brought to trial again, and complained loudly that his petition was not listened to; but no legislator, in framing an Act of Parliament, ever contemplated an offender in so singular a position. Bunyan was simply trying his strength against the Crown and Parliament. The judges and magistrates respected his character, and were unwilling to drive him out of the country; he had himself no wish for liberty on that condition. The only resource, therefore, was to prevent him forcibly from repeating an offence that would compel them to adopt harsh measures which they were so earnestly trying to avoid.

Such was the world-famous imprison nent of John Bunyan, which has been the subject of so much eloquent declamation. It lasted in all for more then twelve years. It might have ended at any time if he would have promised to confine his addresses to a private circle. It did end after six years. He was released under the first declaration of indulgence; but as he instantly recom-

menced his preaching, he was arrested again. Another six years went by; he was again let go, and was taken once more immediately after, preaching in a wood. This time he was detained but a few months, and in form more than reality. The policy of the government was then changed, and he was free for the rest of his life.

His condition during his long confinement has furnished a subject for pictures which if correct would be extremely affecting. It is true that, being unable to attend to his usual business, he spent his unoccupied hours in making tags for boot-laces. With this one fact to built on, and with the assumption that the scene of his sufferings was the Bridge Lockhouse, Nonconformist imagination has drawn a "den" for us, "where there was not a yard or a court to walk in for daily exercise;" "a damp and dreary cell;" "a narrow chink which admits a few scanty rays of light to render visible the abode of woe;" "the prisoner, pale and emaciated, seated on the humid earth, pursuing his daily task, to earn the morsel which prolongs his existence and his confinement together. Near him, reclining in pensive sadness, his blind daughter, five other distressed children, and an affectionate wife, whom pinching want and grief have worn down to the gate of death. Ten summer suns have rolled over the mansion of his misery whose reviving rays have never once penetrated his sad abode," &c., &c.

If this description resembles or approaches the truth, I can but say that to have thus abandoned to want their most distinguished pastor and his family was intensely discreditable to the Baptist community. English prisons in the seventeenth century were not models of good management. But prisoners, whose friends could pay for them, were not consigned to damp and dreary cells; and in default of evidence of which not a particle exists, I cannot charge so reputable a community with a neglect so scandalous. The entire story is in itself incredible. Bunyan was prosperous in his business. He was respected and looked up to by a large and growing body of citizens, including persons of wealth and position in London. He was a representative sufferer fighting the battle of all the Nonconformists in England. He had active supporters in the town of Bedford and among the gentlemen of the county. The authorities, so far as can be inferred from their actions, tried from the first to deal as gently with him as he would allow them to do. Is it conceivable that the Baptists would have left his family to starve; or that his own confinement would have been made so absurdly and needlessly cruel? Is it not far more likely that he found all the indulgences which money could buy and the rules of the prison would allow? Bunyan is not himself responsible for these wild legends. Their real character appears more clearly when we observe how he was occupied during these years.

Friends, in the first place, had free access to him, and strangers who were drawn to him by reputation; while the gaol was considered a private place, and he was allowed to preach there, at least

occasionally, to his fellow-prisoners. Charles Doe, a distinguished Nonconformist, visited him in his confinement, and has left an account of what he saw. "When I was there," he writes, "there were about sixty dissenters besides himself, taken but a little before at a religious meeting at Kaistor, in the county of Bedford, besides two eminent dissenting ministers, Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Dun, by which means the prison was much crowded. Yet, in the midst of all that hurry, I heard Mr. Bunyan both preach and pray with that mighty spirit of faith and plerophory of Divine assistance, that he made me stand and wonder. Here they could sing without fear of being overheard, no informers prowling round, and the world shut out."

This was not all. A fresh and more severe Conventicle Act was passed in 1670. Attempts were made to levy fines in the town of Bedford. There was a riot there. The local officers refused to assist in quelling it. The shops were shut. Bedford was occupied by soldiers. Yet, at this very time, Bunyan was again allowed to go abroad through general connivance. He spent his nights with his family. He even preached now and then in the woods. Once, when he had intended to be out for the night, information was given to a clerical magistrate in the neighbourhood, who disliked him, and a constable was sent to ascertain if the prisoners were all within ward. Bunyan had received a hint of what was coming. He was in his place when the constable came; and the governor of the gaol is reported to have said to him, "You may go out when you please, for you know better when to return than I can tell you." Parliament might pass laws, but the execution of them depended on the local authorities. Before the Declaration of Indulgence, the Baptist church in Bedford was reopened. Bunyan, while still nominally in confinement, attended its meetings. In 1671 he became an Elder; in December of that year he was chosen Pastor. The question was raised whether, as a prisoner, he was eligible. The objection would not have been set aside had he been unable to undertake the duties of the office. These facts prove conclusively that, for a part at least of the twelve years, the imprisonment was little more than formal. He could not have been in the Bridge gaol when he had sixty fellow-prisoners, and was able to preach to them in private. It is unlikely that at any time he was made to suffer any greater hardships than were absolutely inevitable.

But whether Bunyan's confinement was severe or easy, it was otherwise of inestimable value to him. It gave him leisure to read and reflect. Though he preached often, yet there must have been intervals, perhaps long intervals, of compulsory silence. The excitement of perpetual speech-making is fatal to the exercise of the higher qualities. The periods of calm enabled him to discover powers in himself of which he might otherwise have never known the existence. Of books he had but few; for a time only the Bible and Foxe's *Martyrs*. But the Bible thoroughly known is a literature of itself—the rarest and richest in all departments of

thought or imagination which exists. Foxe's *Martyrs*, if he had a complete edition of it, would have given him a very adequate knowledge of history. With those two books he had no cause to complain of intellectual destitution. He must have read more, however. He knew George Herbert—perhaps Spenser—perhaps *Paradise Lost*. But of books, except of the Bible, he was at no time a great student. Happily for himself, he had no other book of Divinity, and he needed none. His real study was human life as he had seen it, and the human heart as he had experienced the workings of it. Though he never mastered successfully the art of verse, he had other gifts which belong to a true poet. He had imagination, if not of the highest, yet of a very high order. He had infinite inventive humour, tenderness, and, better than all, powerful masculine sense. To obtain the use of these faculties he needed only composure, and this his imprisonment secured for him. He had published several theological compositions before his arrest, which have relatively little value. Those which he wrote in prison —even on theological subjects—would alone have made him a reputation as a Nonconformist divine. In no other writings are the peculiar views of Evangelical Calvinism brought out more clearly, or with a more heartfelt conviction of their truth. They have furnished an arsenal from which English Protestant divines have ever since equipped themselves. The most beautiful of them, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, is his own spiritual biography, which contains the account of his early history. The first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* was composed there as an amusement. To this, and to his other works which belong to literature, I shall return in a future chapter.

Visitors who saw him in the gaol found his manner and presence as impressive as his writings. "He was mild and affable in conversation," says one of them, "not given to loquacity or to much discourse, unless some urgent occasion required. It was observed he never spoke of himself or of his talents, but seemed low in his own eyes. He was never heard to reproach or revile any, whatever injury he received, but rather rebuked those who did so. He managed all things with such exactness as if he had made it his study not to give offence."

The final *Declaration of Indulgence* came at last, bringing with it the privilege for which Bunyan had fought and suffered. Charles II. cared as little for liberty as his father or his brother, but he wished to set free the Catholics, and as a step towards it he conceded a general toleration to the Protestant Dissenters. Within two years of the passing of the Conventicle Act of 1670, this and every other penal law against Nonconformists was suspended. They were allowed to open their "meeting-houses" for "worship and devotion," subject only to a few easy conditions. The localities were to be specified in which chapels were required, and the ministers were to receive their licenses from the Crown. To prevent suspicions, the Roman Catholics were for the present excluded from the benefit of the concession. Mass could be said, as before,

only in private houses. A year later, the Proclamation was confirmed by Act of Parliament.

Thus Bunyan's long imprisonment was ended. The cause was won. He had been its foremost representative and champion, and was one of the first persons to receive the benefit of the change of policy. He was now forty-four years old. The order for his release was signed on May 8, 1672. His license as pastor of the Baptist chapel at Bedford was issued on the 9th. He established himself in a small house in the town. "When he came abroad," says one, "he found his temporal affairs were gone to wreck, and he had, as to them, to begin again as if he had newly come into the world. But yet he was not destitute of friends who had all along supported him with necessaries, and had been very good to his family; so that by their assistance, getting things a little about him again, he resolved, as much as possible, to decline worldly business, and give himself wholly up to the service of God." As much as possible; but not entirely. In 1685, being afraid of a return of persecution, he made over, as a precaution, his whole estate to his wife: "All and singular his goods, chattels, debts, ready money, plate, rings, household stuff, apparel, utensils, brass, pewter, bedding, and all his other substance." In this deed he still describes himself as a brazier. The language is that of a man in easy, if not ample, circumstances. "Though, by reason of losses which he sustained by imprisonment," says another biographer, "his treasures swelled not to excess, he always had sufficient to live decently and creditably." His writings and his sufferings had made him famous throughout England. He became the actual head of the Baptist community. Men called him, half in irony, half in seriousness, Bishop Bunyan, and he passed the rest of his life honourably and innocently, occupied in writing, preaching, district visiting, and opening daughter churches. Happy in his work, happy in the sense that his influence was daily extending—spreading over his own country, and to the far-off settlements in America, he spent his last years in his own Land of Beulah, Doubting Castle out of sight, and the towers and minarets of Emmanuel Land growing nearer and clearer as the day went on.

He had not detected, or at least, at first, he did not detect, the sinister purpose which lay behind the Indulgence. The exception of the Roman Catholics gave him perfect confidence in the Government, and after his release he published a *Discourse upon Antichrist*, with a preface, in which he credited Charles with the most righteous intentions, and urged his countrymen to be loyal and faithful to him. His object in writing it, he said, "was to testify his loyalty to the King, his love to the brethren, and his service to his country." Antichrist was, of course, the Pope, the deadliest of all enemies to vital Christianity. To its kings and princes England owed its past deliverance from him. To kings England must look for his final overthrow.

"As the noble King Henry VIII. did cast down the Antichristian worship, so he cast down the laws that held it up; so also did

the good King Edward, his son. The brave Queen Elizabeth, also, the sister of King Edward, left of things of this nature, to her lasting fame, behind her." Cromwell he dared not mention—perhaps he did not wish to mention him. But he evidently believed that there was better hope in Charles Stuart than in conspiracy and revolution.

"Kings," he said, "must be the men that shall down with Antichrist, and they shall down with her in God's time. God hath begun to draw the hearts of some of them from her already, and He will set them in time against her round about. If, therefore, they do not that work so fast as we would have them, let us exercise patience and hope in God. 'Tis a wonder they go as fast as they do, since the concerns of whole kingdoms lie upon their shoulders, and there are so many Sanballats and Tobias's to flatter them and misinform them. Let the King have visibly a place in your hearts, and with heart and mouth give God thanks for him. He is a better Saviour of us than we may be aware of, and hath delivered us from more deaths than we can tell how to think. We are bidden to give God thanks for all men, and in the first place for kings, and all that are in authority. Be not angry with them—no, not in thy thought. But consider, if they go not in the work of Reformation so fast as thou wouldst they should, the fault may be thine. Know that thou also hast thy cold and chill frames of heart, and sittest still when thou shouldst be up and doing. Pray for the long life of the King. Pray that God would give wisdom and judgment to the King; pray that God would discern all plots and conspiracies against his person and government. I do confess myself one of the old-fashioned professors that wish to fear God and honour the King. I am also for blessing them that curse me, for doing good to them that hate me, and for praying for them that despitefully use me and persecute me; and I have had more peace in the practice of these things than all the world are aware of."

The Suarts, both Charles and James, were grateful for Bunyan's services. The Nonconformists generally went up and down in Royal favour; lost their privileges and regained them as their help was needed or could be dispensed with. But Bunyan was never more molested. He did what he liked. He preached where he pleased, and no one troubled him or called him to account. He was not insincere. His constancy in enduring so long an imprisonment which a word from him would have ended, lifts him beyond the reach of unworthy suspicions. But he disapproved always of violent measures. His rule was to submit to the law; and where, as he said, he could not obey actively, then to bear with patience the punishment that might be inflicted on him. Perhaps he really hoped, as long as hope was possible, that good might come out of the Stuarts.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AND DEATH OF MR. BADMAN.

To his contemporaries Bunyan was known as the Nonconformist Martyr, and the greatest living Protestant preacher. To us he is mainly interesting through his writings, and especially through *The Pilgrim's Progress.* Although he possessed in a remarkable degree the gift of expressing himself in written words, he had himself no value for literature. He cared simply for spiritual truth, and literature in his eyes was only useful as a means of teaching it. Every thing with which a reasonable man could concern himself was confined within the limits of Christian faith and practice. Ambition was folly. Amusement was idle trifling in a life so short as man's, and with issues so far-reaching depending upon it. To understand, and to make others understand, what Christ had done, and what Christ required men to do, was the occupation of his whole mind, and no object ever held his attention except in connection with it. With a purpose so strict, and a theory of religion so precise, there is usually little play for imagination or feeling. Though we read Protestant theology as a duty, we find it as dry in the mouth as sawdust. The literature which would please must represent nature, and nature refuses to be bound into our dogmatic systems. No object can be pictured truly, except by a mind which has sympathy with it. Shakespeare no more hates Iago than Iago hates himself. He allows Iago to exhibit himself in his own way, as nature does. Every character, if justice is to be done to it, must be painted at its best, as it appears to itself; and a man impressed deeply with religious convictions is generally incapable of the sympathy which would give him an insight into what he disapproves and dislikes. And yet Bunyan, intensely religious as he was, and narrow as his theology was, is always human. His genius remains fresh and vigorous under the least promising conditions. All mankind being under sin together, he has no favourites to flatter, no opponents to misrepresent. There is a kindliness in his descriptions even of the Evil One's attacks upon himself.

The Pilgrim's Progress, though professedly an allegoric story of the Protestant plan of salvation, is conceived in the large, wide spirit of humanity itself. Anglo-Catholic and Lutheran, Calvinist and Deist can alike read it with delight, and find their own theories

in it. Even the Romanist has only to blot out a few paragraphs, and can discover no purer model of a Christian life to place in the hands of his children. The religion of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is the religion which must be always and everywhere, as long as man believes that he has a soul and is responsible for his actions; and thus it is that, while theological folios once devoured as manna from Heaven now lie on the bookshelves dead as Egyptian mummies, this book is wrought into the mind and memory of every well-conditioned English or American child; while the matured man, furnished with all the knowledge which literature can teach him, still finds the adventures of Christian as charming as the adventures of Ulysses or Æneas. He sees there the reflexion of himself, the familiar features of his own nature, which remains the same from era to era. Time cannot impair its interest, or intellectual progress make it cease to be true to experience.

But *The Pilgrim's Progress*, though the best known, is not the only work of imagination which Bunyan produced; he wrote another religious allegory, which Lord Macaulay thought would have been the best of its kind in the world if *The Pilgrim's Progress* had not existed. The *Life of Mr. Badman*, though now scarcely read at all, contains a vivid picture of rough English life in the days of Charles II. Bunyan was a poet, too, in the technical sense of the word; and though he disclaimed the name, and though rhyme and metre were to him as Saul's armour to David, the fine quality of his mind still shows itself in the uncongenial accoutrements.

It has been the fashion to call Bunyan's verse doggerel; but no verse is doggerel which has a sincere and rational meaning in it. Goethe, who understood his own trade, says that the test of poetry is the substance which remains when the poetry is reduced to prose. Bunyan had infinite invention. His mind was full of objects which he had gathered at first-hand, from observation and reflection. He had excellent command of the English language, and could express what he wished with sharp, defined outlines, and without the waste of a word. The rhythmical structure of his prose is carefully correct. Scarcely a syllable is ever out of place. His ear for verse, though less true, is seldom wholly at fault, and, whether in prose or verse, he had the superlative merit that he could never write nonsense. If one of the motives of poetical form be to clothe thought and feeling in the dress in which it can be most easily remembered, Bunyan's lines are often as successful as the best lines of Quarles or George Herbert. Who, for instance, could forget these?—

> "Sin is the worm of hell, the lasting fire:
> Hell would soon loose its heat should sin expire;
> Better sinless in hell than to be where
> Heaven is, and to be found a sinner there."

Or these, on persons whom the world calls men of spirit:—

"Though you dare crack a coward's crown,
Or quarrel for a pin,
You dare not on the wicked frown,
Or speak against their sin."

The *Book of Ruth* and the *History of Joseph*, done into blank verse, are really beautiful idylls. The substance with which he worked, indeed, is so good that there would be a difficulty in spoiling it completely; but the prose of the translation in the English Bible, faultless as it is, loses nothing in Bunyan's hands, and if we found these poems in the collected works of a poet laureate, we should consider that a difficult task had been accomplished successfully. Bunyan felt, like the translators of the preceding century, that the text was sacred, that his duty was to give the exact meaning of it, without epithets or ornaments, and thus the original grace is completely preserved.

Of a wholly different kind, and more after Quarles's manner, is a collection of thoughts in verse, which he calls a book for boys and girls. All his observations ran naturally in one direction; to minds possessed and governed by religion, nature—be their creed what it may—is always a parable reflecting back their own views.

But how neatly expressed are these *Meditations upon an Egg*:—

"The egg's no chick by falling from a hen,
Nor man's a Christian till he's born again;
The egg's at first contained in the shell,
Men afore grace in sin and darkness dwell;
The egg, when laid, by warmth is made a chicken,
And Christ by grace the dead in sin doth quicken:
The egg when first a chick the shell's its prison,
So flesh to soul who yet with Christ is risen."

Or this, *On a Swallow*:—

"This pretty bird! Oh, how she flies and sings;
But could she do so if she had not wings?
Her wings bespeak my faith, her songs my peace:
When I believe and sing, my doubtings cease.

Though the Globe Theatre was, in the opinion of Nonformists, "the heart of Satan's empire," Bunyan must yet have known something of Shakspeare. In the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* we find:—

"Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather."

The resemblance to the song in *As You Like It* is too near to be accidental:—

"Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to be in the sun;

Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither.
Here shall be no enemy,
Save winter and rough weather."

Bunyan may, perhaps, have heard the lines, and the rhymes may have clung to him without his knowing whence they came. But he would never have been heard of outside his own communion, if his imagination had found no better form of expression for itself than verse. His especial gift was for allegory, the single form of imaginative fiction which he would not have considered trivial, and his especial instrument was plain, unaffected Saxon prose. *The Holy War* is a people's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained in one. The *Life of Mr. Badman* is a didactic tale, describing the career of a vulgar, middle-class, unprincipled scoundrel.

These are properly Bunyan's "works," the results of his life, so far as it affects the present generation of Englishmen; and as they are little known, I shall give an account of each of them.

The *Life of Badman* is presented as a dialogue between Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Attentive. Mr. Wiseman tells the story, Mr. Attentive comments upon it. The names recall Bunyan's well-known manner. The figures stand for typical characters; but as the *dramatis personæ* of many writers of fiction, while professing to be beings of flesh and blood, are no more than shadows, so Bunyan's shadows are solid men, whom we can feel and handle.

Mr. Badman is, of course, one of the "reprobate." Bunyan considered theoretically that a reprobate may to outward appearance have the graces of a saint, and that there may be little in his conduct to mark his true character. A reprobate may be sorry for his sins, he may repent and lead a good life. He may reverence good men, and may try to resemble them; he may pray, and his prayers may be answered; he may have the spirit of God, and may receive another heart, and yet he may be under the covenant of works, and may be eternally lost. This Bunyan could say while he was writing theology; but art has its rules as well as its more serious sister, and when he had to draw a living specimen, he drew him as he had seen him in his own Bedford neighbourhood.

Badman showed from childhood a propensity for evil. He was so "addicted to lying that his parents could not distinguish when he was speaking the truth. He would invent, tell, and stand to the lies which he invented, with such an audacious face, that one might read in his very countenance the symptoms of a hard and desperate heart. It was not the fault of his parents; they were much dejected at the beginnings of their son; nor did he want counsel and correction, if that would have made him better; but all availed nothing."

Lying was not Badman's only fault. He took to pilfering and stealing. He robbed his neighbours' orchards. He picked up money if he found it lying about. Especially, Mr. Wiseman notes

that he hated Sundays. "Reading Scriptures, godly conferences, repeating of sermons and prayers, were things that he could not away with." "He was an enemy to that day, because more restraint was laid upon him from his own ways than was possible on any other." Mr. Wiseman never doubts that the Puritan Sunday ought to have been appreciated by little boys. If a child disliked it, the cause could only be his own wickedness. Young Badman "was greatly given also to swearing and cursing." "He made no more of it" than Mr. Wiseman made "of telling his fingers." "He counted it a glory to swear and curse, and it was as natural to him as to eat, drink or sleep." Bunyan, in this description, is supposed to have taken the picture from himself. But too much may be made of this. He was thinking, perhaps, of what he might have been if God's grace had not preserved him. He himself was saved. Badman is represented as given over from the first. Anecdotes, however, are told of temporary providential judgments upon swearers, which had much impressed Bunyan. One was of a certain Dorothy Mately, a woman whose business was to wash rubbish at the Derby lead-mines. Dorothy (it was in the year when Bunyan was first imprisoned) had stolen twopence from the coat of a boy who was working near her. When the boy taxed her with having robbed him, she wished the ground might swallow her up if she had ever touched his money. Presently after, some children, who were watching her, saw a movement in the bank on which she was standing. They called to her to take care, but it was too late. The bank fell in, and she was carried down along with it. A man ran to help her, but the sides of the pit were crumbling round her: a large stone fell on her head; the rubbish followed, and she was overwhelmed. When she was dug out afterwards, the pence were found in her pocket. Bunyan was perfectly satisfied that her death was supernatural. To discover miracles is not peculiar to Catholics. They will be found wherever there is an active belief in immediate providential government.

Those more cautious in forming their conclusions will think, perhaps, that the woman was working above some shaft in the mine, that the crust had suddenly broken, and that it would equally have fallen in, when gravitation required it to fall, if Dorothy Mately had been a saint. They will remember the words about the Tower of Siloam. But to return to Badman.

His father, being unable to manage so unpromising a child, bound him out as an apprentice. The master to whom he was assigned was as good a man as the father could find: upright, God-fearing, and especially considerate of his servants. He never worked them too hard. He left them time to read and pray. He admitted no light or mischievous books within his doors. He was not one of those whose religion "hung as a cloke in his house, and was never seen on him when he went abroad." His household was as well fed and cared for as himself, and he required nothing of others of which he did not set them an example in his own person.

This man did his best to reclaim young Badman, and was particularly kind to him. But his exertions were thrown away. The good-for-nothing youth read filthy romances on the sly. He fell asleep in church, or made eyes at the pretty girls. He made acquaintance with low companions. He became profligate, got drunk at ale-houses, sold his master's property to get money, or stole it out of the cash-box. Thrice he ran away and was taken back again. The third time he was allowed to go. "The House of Correction would have been the most fit for him, but thither his master was loath to send him, for the love he bore his father."

He was again apprenticed; this time to a master like himself. Being wicked, he was given over to wickedness. The ways of it were not altogether pleasant. He was fed worse and he was worked harder than he had been before; when he stole, or neglected his business, he was beaten. He liked his new place, however, better than the old. "At least, there was no godliness in the house, which he hated worst of all."

So far, Bunyan's hero was travelling the usual road of the Idle Apprentice, and the gallows would have been the commonplace ending of it. But this would not have answered Bunyan's purpose. He wished to represent the good-for-nothing character, under the more instructive aspect of worldly success, which bad men arrive at as well as good, if they are prudent and cunning. Bunyan gives his hero every chance. He submits him from the first to the best influences; he creates opportunities for repentance at every stage of a long career—opportunities which the reprobate nature cannot profit by, yet increases its guilt by neglecting.

Badman's term being out, his father gives him money and sets him up as a tradesman on his own account. Mr. Attentive considers this to have been a mistake. Mr. Wiseman answers that, even in the most desperate cases, kindness in parents is more likely to succeed than severity, and, if it fails, they will have the less to reproach themselves with. The kindness is, of course, thrown away. Badman continues a loose blackguard, extravagant, idle, and dissolute. He comes to the edge of ruin. His situation obliges him to think; and now the interest of the story begins. He must repair his fortune by some means or other. The easiest way is by marriage. There was a young orphan lady in the neighbourhood, who was well off and her own mistress. She was a "professor," eagerly given to religion, and not so wise as she ought to have been. Badman pretends to be converted. He reforms, or seems to reform. He goes to meeting, sings hymns, adopts the most correct form of doctrine, tells the lady that he does not want her money, but that he wants a companion who will go with him along the road to Heaven. He was plausible, good-looking, and, to all appearance, as absorbed as herself in the one thing needful. The congregation warn her, but to no purpose. She marries him, and finds what she has done too late. In her fortune he has all that he wanted. He swears at her, treats her brutally, brings prostitutes into his house, laughs at her religion,

and at length orders her to give it up. When she refuses, Bunyan introduces a special feature of the times, and makes Badman threaten to turn informer, and bring her favourite minister to gaol. The informers were the natural but most accursed products of the Conventicle Acts. Popular abhorrence relieved itself by legends of the dreadful judgments which had overtaken these wretches.

In St. Neots an informer was bitten by a dog. The wound gangrened, and the flesh rotted off his bones. In Bedford "there was one W. S." (Bunyan probably knew him too well), "a man of very wicked life, and he, when there seemed to be countenance given it, would needs turn informer. Well, so he did, and was as diligent in his business as most of them could be. He would watch at nights, climb trees, and range the woods of days, if possible to find out the meeters, for then they were forced to meet in the fields. Yea, he would curse them bitterly, and swore most fearfully what he would do to them when he found them. Well, after he had gone on like a Bedlam in his course awhile, and had done some mischief to the people, he was stricken by the hand of God. He was taken with a faltering in his speech, a weakness in the back sinews of his neck, that ofttimes he held up his head by strength of hand. After this his speech went quite away, and he could speak no more than a swine or a bear. Like one of them he would gruntle and make an ugly noise, according as he was offended or pleased, or would have anything done. He walked about till God had made a sufficient spectacle of his judgments for his sin, and then, on a sudden, he was stricken, and died miserably."

Badman, says Mr. Wiseman, "had malice enough in his heart" to turn informer, but he was growing prudent and had an eye to the future. As a tradesman he had to live by his neighbours. He knew that they would not forgive him, so "he had that wit in his anger that he did it not." Nothing else was neglected to make the unfortunate wife miserable. She bore him seven children, also typical figures. "One was a very gracious child, that loved its mother dearly. This child Mr. Badman could not abide, and it oftenest felt the weight of its father's fingers. Three were as bad as himself. The others that remained became a kind of mongrel professors, not so bad as their father nor so good as their mother, but betwixt them both. They had their mother's notions and their father actions. Their father did not like them because they had their mother's tongue. Their mother did not like them because they had their father's heart and life, nor were they fit company for good or bad. They were forced with Esau to join in affinity with Ishmael—to wit, to look out for a people that were hypocrites like themselves, and with them they matched and lived and died."

Badman, meanwhile, with the help of his wife's fortune, grew into an important person, and his character becomes a curious study. "He went," we are told, "to school with the devil, from his childhood to the end of his life." He was shrewd in matters of business, began to extend his operations, and "drove a great

trade." He carried a double face. He was evil with the evil. He pretended to be good with the good. In religion he affected to be a freethinker, careless of death and judgment, and ridiculing those who feared them "as frighted with unseen bugbears." But he wore a mask when it suited him, and admired himself for the ease with which he could assume whatever aspect was convenient. "I can be religious and irreligious," he said; "I can be anything or nothing. I can swear, and speak against swearing. I can lie, and speak against lying. I can drink, wench, be unclean, and defraud, and not be troubled for it. I can enjoy myself, and am master of my own ways, not they of me. This I have attained with much study, care, and pains." "An Atheist Badman was, if such a thing as an Atheist could be. He was not alone in that mystery. There was abundance of men of the same mind and the same principle. He was only an arch or chief one among them."

Mr. Badman now took to speculation, which Bunyan's knowledge of business enabled him to describe with instructive minuteness. His adventures were on a large scale, and by some mistakes and by personal extravagance he had nearly ruined himself a second time. In this condition he discovered a means, generally supposed to be a more modern invention, of "getting money by hatfuls."

"He gave a sudden and great rush into several men's debts to the value of four or five thousand pounds, driving at the same time a very great trade by selling many things for less than they cost him, to get him custom and blind his creditor's eyes. When he had well feathered his nest with other men's goods and money, after a little while he breaks; while he had by craft and knavery made so sure of what he had that his creditors could not touch a penny. He sends mournful, sugared letters to them, desiring them not to be severe with him, for he bore towards all men an honest mind, and would pay them as far as he was able. He talked of the greatness of the taxes, the badness of the times, his losses by bad debts, and he brought them to a composition to take five shillings in the pound. His release was signed and sealed, and Mr. Badman could now put his head out-of-doors again, and be a better man than when he shut up shop by several thousands of pounds."

Twice or three times he repeated the same trick with equal success. It is likely enough that Bunyan was drawing from life, and perhaps from a member of his own congregation; for he says that "he had known a professor do it." He detested nothing so much as sham religion, which was put on as a pretence. "A professor," he exclaims, "and practise such villanies as these! Such an one is not worthy the name. Go, professors, go—leave off profession, unless your will lead your lives according to your profession. Better never profess than make profession a stalking-horse to sin, deceit, the devil, and hell."

Bankruptcy was not the only art by which Badman piled up his fortune. The seventeenth century was not so far behind us as we

sometimes persuade ourselves. "He dealt by deceitful weights and measures. He kept weights to buy by, and weights to sell by; measures to buy by, and measures to sell by. Those he bought by were too big, and those he sold by were too little. If he had to do with other men's weights and measures, he could use a thing called sleight of hand. He had the art, besides, to misreckon men in their accounts, whether by weight or measure or money; and if a question was made of his faithful dealing, he had his servants ready that would vouch and swear to his look or word. He would sell goods that cost him not the best price by far, for as much as he sold his best of all for. He had also a trick to mingle his commodity, that that which was bad might go off with the least mistrust. If any of his customers paid him money, he would call for payment a second time. And if they could not produce good and sufficient ground of the payment, a hundred to one but they paid it again."

"To buy in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest," was Mr. Badman's common rule in business. According to modern political economy, it is the cardinal principle of wholesome trade. In Bunyan's opinion it was knavery in disguise, and certain to degrade and demoralise every one who acted upon it. Bunyan had evidently thought on the subject. Mr. Attentive is made to object:—

"But you know that there is no settled price set by God upon any commodity that is bought or sold under the sun; but all things that we buy and sell do ebb and flow as to price, like the tide. How then shall a man of tender conscience do, neither to wrong the seller, buyer, nor himself in the buying and selling of commodities?"

Mr. Wiseman answers in the spirit of our old Acts of Parliament, before political economy was invented:—

"Let a man have conscience towards God, charity to his neighbours, and moderation in dealing. Let the tradesman consider that there is not that in great gettings and in abundance which the most of men do suppose; for all that a man has over and above what serves for his present necessity and supply serves only to feed the lusts of the eye. Be thou confident that God's eyes are upon thy ways; that He marks them, writes them down, and seals them up in a bag against the time to come. Be sure that thou rememberest that thou knowest not the day of thy death. Thou shalt have nothing that thou mayest so much as carry away in thy hand. Guilt shall go with thee if thou hast gotten thy substance dishonestly, and they to whom thou shalt leave it shall receive it to their hurt. These things duly considered, I will shew thee how thou should'st live in the practical part of this art. Art thou to buy or sell? If thou sellest, do not commend. If thou buyest, do not dispraise any otherwise but to give the thing that thou hast to do with its just value and worth. Art thou a seller, and do things grow cheap? set not thy hand to help or hold them up higher. Art thou a buyer, and do things grow dear? use no cunning or deceit-

ful language to pull them down. Leave things to the Providence of God, and do thou with moderation submit to his hand. Hurt not thy neighbour by crying out, Scarcity, scarcity! beyond the truth of things. Especially take heed of doing this by way of a prognostic for time to come. This wicked thing may be done by hoarding up (food) when the hunger and necessity of the poor calls for it. If things rise, do thou be grieved. Be also moderate in all thy sellings, and be sure let the poor have a pennyworth, and sell thy corn to those who are in necessity; which thou wilt do when thou showest mercy to the poor in thy selling to him, and when thou undersellest the market for his sake because he is poor. This is to buy and sell with a good conscience. The buyer thou wrongest not, thy conscience thou wrongest not, thyself thou wrongest not, for God will surely recompense with thee."

These views of Bunyan's are at issue with modern science, but his principles and ours are each adjusted to the objects of desire which good men in those days, and good men in ours, have respectively set before themselves. If wealth means money, as it is now assumed to do, Bunyan is wrong, and modern science right. If wealth means moral welfare, then those who aim at it will do well to follow Bunyan's advice. It is to be feared that this part of his doctrine is less frequently dwelt upon by those who profess to admire and follow him, than the theory of imputed righteousness or justification by faith.

Mr. Badman, by his various ingenuities, became a wealthy man. His character as a tradesman could not have been a secret from his neighbours, but money and success covered it over. The world spoke well of him. He became "proud and haughty," took part in public affairs, "counted himself as wise as the wisest in the country, as good as the best, and as beautiful as he that had the most of it." "He took great delight in praising himself, and as much in the praise that others gave him." "He could not abide that any should think themselves above him, or that their wit and personage should be by others set before his." He had an objection, nevertheless, to being called proud, and when Mr. Attentive asked why, his companion answered with a touch which reminds us of De Foe, that "Badman *did not tell him the reason*." He supposed it to be that which was common to all vile persons. They loved their vice, but cared not to bear its name." Badman said he was unwilling to seem singular and fantastical, and in this way he justified his expensive and luxurious way of living. Singularity of all kinds he affected to dislike, and for that reason his special pleasure was to note the faults of professors. "If he could get anything by the end that had scandal in it—if it did but touch professors, however falsely reported—oh, then he would glory, laugh and be glad, and lay it upon the whole party. Hang these rogues, he would say, there is not a barrel better herring in all the holy brotherhood of them. Like to like, quoth the devil to the collier. This is your precise crew, and then he would send them all home with a curse."

Thus Bunyan developed his specimen scoundrel, till he brought him to the high altitudes of worldly prosperity; skilful in every villanous art, skilful equally in keeping out of the law's hands, and feared, admired, and respected by all his neighbours. The reader who desires to see Providence vindicated would now expect to find him detected in some crimes by which justice could lay hold, and poetical retribution fall upon him in the midst of his triumph. An inferior artist would certainly have allowed his story to end in this way. But Bunyan, satisfied though he was that dramatic judgments did overtake offenders in this world with direct and startling appropriateness, was yet aware that it was often otherwise, and that the worst fate which could be inflicted on a completely worthless person was to allow him to work out his career unvisited by any penalties which might have disturbed his conscience and occasioned his amendment. He chose to make his story natural, and to confine himself to natural machinery. The judgment to come Mr. Badman laughed at "as old woman's fable," but his courage lasted only as long as he was well and strong. One night, as he was riding home drunk, his horse fell, and he broke his leg. "You would not think," says Mr. Wiseman, "how he swore at first. Then, coming to himself, and finding he was badly hurt, he cried out, after the manner of such, Lord, help me! Lord, have mercy on me! good God, deliver me! and the like. He was picked up and taken home, where he lay some time. In his pain he called on God; but whether it was that his sin might be pardoned, and his soul saved, or whether to be rid of his pain," Mr. Wiseman "could not determine." This leads to several stories of drunkards which Bunyan clearly believed to be literally true. Such facts or legends were the food on which his mind had been nourished. They were in the air which contemporary England breathed.

"I have read, in Mr. Clarke's *Looking-glass for Sinners*," Mr. Wiseman said, "that upon a time a certain drunken fellow boasted in his cups that there was neither heaven nor hell. Also, he said he believed that man had no soul, and that for his own part he would sell his soul to any that would buy it. Then did one of his companions buy it of him for a cup of wine, and presently the devil, in man's shape, bought it of that man again at the same price; and so, in the presence of them all, laid hold of the soul-seller, and carried him away through the air, so that he was no more heard of."

Again:

"There was one at Salisbury drinking and carousing at a tavern, and he drank a health to the devil, saying that if the devil would not come and pledge him, he could not believe that there was either God or devil. Whereupon his companions, stricken with fear, hastened out of the room; and presently after, hearing a hideous noise and smelling a stinking savour, the vintner ran into the chamber, and coming in he missed his guest, and found the window broken, the iron bars in it bowed and all bloody, but the man was never heard of afterwards."

These visitations were answers to a direct challenge of the evil spirit's existence, and were thus easy to be accounted for. But no devil came for Mr. Badman. He clung to his unfortunate, neglected wife. "She became his dear wife, his godly wife, his honest wife, his duck, his dear and all." He thought he was dying, and hell and all its horrors rose up before him. "Fear was in his face, and in his tossings to and fro he would often say, I am undone, I am undone; my vile life hath undone me!" Atheism did not help him. It never helped anyone in such extremities, Mr. Wiseman said, as he had known in another instance:—

"There was a man dwelt about twelve miles off from us," he said, "that had so trained up himself in his Atheistical notions, that at last he attempted to write a book against Jesus Christ and the Divine authority of the Scriptures. I think it was not printed. Well, after many days God struck him with sickness, whereof he died. So, being sick, and musing of his former doings, the book that he had written tore his conscience as a lion would tear a kid. Some of my friends went to see him; and as they were in his chamber one day, he hastily called for pen and ink and paper, which, when it was given to him, he took it and writ to this purpose: "I, such an one in such a town, must go to hell-fire for writing a book against Jesus Christ." He would have leaped out of the window to have killed himself, but was by them prevented of that, so he died in his bed by such a death as it was."

Badman seemed equally miserable. But death-bed repentances, as Bunyan sensibly said, were seldom of more value than "the howling of a dog." The broken leg was set again. The pain of body went, and with it the pain of mind. "He was assisted out of his uneasiness," says Bunyan, with a characteristic hit at the scientific views then coming into fashion, "by his doctor," who told him that his alarms had come "from an affection of the brain, caused by want of sleep;" "they were nothing but vapours and the effects of his distemper." He gathered his spirits together, and became the old man once more. His poor wife, who had believed him penitent, broke her heart, and died of the disappointment. The husband gave himself up to loose connections with abandoned women, one of whom persuaded him one day, when he was drunk, to make her a promise of marriage, and she held him to his word. Then retribution came upon him, with the coarse commonplace, yet rigid justice which fact really deals out. The second bad wife avenged the wrongs of the first innocent wife. He was mated with a companion "who could fit him with cursing and swearing, give him oath for oath, and curse for curse. They would fight, and fly at each other like cat and dog." In this condition—for Bunyan, before sending his hero to his account, gave him a protracted spell of earthly discomforts—they lived sixteen years together. Fortune, who had so long favoured his speculations, turned her back upon him. Between them they "sinned all his wealth away," and at last parted "as poor as how lets."

Then came the end. Badman was still in middle life, and had naturally a powerful constitution ; but his "cups and his queans" had undermined his strength. Dropsy came, and gout, with worse in his bowels, and "on the top of them all, as the captain of the men of death that came to take him away," consumption. Bunyan was a true artist, though he knew nothing of the rules, and was not aware that he was an artist at all. He was not to be tempted into spoiling a natural story with the melo-dramatic horrors of a sinner's death-bed. He had let his victim "howl" in the usual way, when he meant him to recover. He had now simply to conduct him to the gate of the place where he was to receive the reward of his iniquities. It was enough to bring him thither still impenitent, with the grave solemnity with which a felon is taken to execution.

"As his life was full of sin," says Mr. Wiseman, "so his death was without repentance. He had not, in all the time of his sickness, a sight and a sense of his sins ; but was as much at quiet as if he had never sinned in his life ; he was as secure as if he had been sinless as an angel. When he drew near his end, there was no more alteration in him than what was made by his disease upon his body. He was the self-same Mr. Badman still, not only in name but in condition, and that to the very day of his death and the moment in which he died. There seemed not to be in it to the standers-by so much as a strong struggle of nature. He died like a lamb, or, as men call it, like a chrisom child, quietly and without fear."

To which end of Mr. Badman Bunyan attaches the following remarks : "If a wicked man, if a man who has lived all his days in notorious sin, dies quietly, his quiet dying is so far from being a sign of his being saved that it is an incontestable proof of his damnation. No man can be saved except he repents ; nor can he repent that knows not that he is a sinner : and he that knows himself to be a sinner will, I warrant him, be molested for his knowledge before he can die quietly. I am no admirer of sick-bed repentance ; for I think verily it is seldom good for anything. But I see that he that hath lived in sin and profaneness all his days, as Badman did, and yet shall die quietly—that is, without repentance steps in between his life and death—is assuredly gone to hell. When God would show the greatness of his anger against sin and sinners in one word, He saith, Let them alone! Let them alone—that is, disturb them not. Let them go on without control. Let the devil enjoy them peaceably. Let him carry them out of the world. unconverted, quietly. This is the sorest of judgments. I do not say that all wicked men that are molested at their death with a sense of sin and fear of hell do therefore go to heaven ; for some are made to see and are left to despair. But I say there is no surer sign of a man's damnation than to die quietly after a sinful life—than to sin and die with a heart that cannot repent. The opinion, therefore, of the common people of this kind of death is frivolous and vain."

So ends this very remarkable story. It is extremely interesting, merely as a picture of vulgar English life in a provincial town, such as Bedford was when Bunyan lived there. The drawing is so

good, the details so minute, the conception so unexaggerated, that we are disposed to believe that we must have a real history before us. But such a supposition is only a compliment to the skill of the composer. Bunyan's inventive faculty was a spring that never ran dry. He had a manner, as I said, like De Foe's, of creating the allusion that we are reading realities, by little touches such as "I do not know;" "He did not tell me this;" or the needless introduction of particulars irrelevant to the general plot such as we always stumble on in life, and writers of fiction generally omit. Bunyan was never prosecuted for libel by Badman's relations, and the character is the corresponding contrast to Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the pilgrim's journey being in the opposite direction to the other place. Throughout we are on the solid earth, amidst real experiences. No demand is made on our credulity by Providential interpositions, except in the intercalated anecdotes which do not touch the story itself. The wicked man's career is not brought to the abrupt or sensational issues so much in favour with ordinary didactic tale-writers. Such issues are the exception, not the rule, and the edifying story loses its effect when the reader turns from it to actual life, and perceives that the majority are not punished in any such way. Bunyan conceals nothing, assumes nothing, and exaggerates nothing. He makes his bad man sharp and shrewd. He allows sharpness and shrewdness to bring him the rewards which such qualities in fact command. Badman is successful, he is powerful; he enjoys all the pleasures which money can buy; his bad wife helps him to ruin, but otherwise he is not unhappy, and he dies in peace. Bunyan has made him a brute, because such men do become brutes. It is the real punishment of brutal and selfish habits. There the figure stands: a picture of a man in the rank of English life with which Bunyan was most familiar, travelling along the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire, as the way to Emmanuel's Land was through the Slough of Despond and the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Pleasures are to be found among the primroses, such pleasures as a brute can be gratified by. Yet the reader feels that, even if there was no bonfire, he would still prefer to be with Christian.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE HOLY WAR."

THE supernatural has been successfully represented in poetry, painting, or sculpture, only at particular periods of human history, and under peculiar mental conditions. The artist must himself believe in the supernatural, or his description of it will be a sham, without dignity and without credibility. He must feel himself able, at the same time, to treat the subject which he selects with freedom, throwing his own mind boldly into it, or he will produce, at best, the hard and stiff forms of literal tradition. When Benvenuto Cellini was preparing to make an image of the Virgin, he declares gravely that Our Lady appeared to him, that he might know what she was like; and so real was the apparition that, for many months after, he says that his friends, when the room was dark, could see a faint aureole about his head. Yet Benvenuto worked as if his own brain was partly the author of what he produced, and, like other contemporary artists, used his mistresses for his models, and was no servile copyist of phantoms seen in visions. There is a truth of the imagination, and there is a truth of fact, religion hovering between them, translating one into the other, turning natural phenomena into the activity of personal beings; or giving earthly names and habitations to mere creatures of fancy. Imagination creates a mythology. The priest takes it and fashions out of it a theology, a ritual, or a sacred history. So long as the priest can convince the world that he is dealing with literal facts he holds reason prisoner, and imagination is his servant. In the twilight, when dawn is coming near but has not yet come; when the uncertain nature of the legend is felt, though not intelligently discerned—imagination is the first to resume its liberty; it takes possession of its own inheritance, it dreams of its gods and demi-gods, as Benvenuto dreamt of the Virgin, and it re-shapes the priest's traditions in noble and beautiful forms. Homer and the Greek dramatists would not have dared to bring the gods upon the stage so freely had they believed Zeus and Apollo were living persons, like the man in the next street, who might call the poet to account for what they were made to do and say; but neither, on the other hand, could have been actively conscious that Zeus and Apollo were apparitions, which had no existence except in their own brains.

The condition is extremely peculiar. It can exist only in certain epochs, and in its nature is necessarily transitory. Where belief is consciously gone, the artist has no reverence for his work, and, therefore, can inspire none. The greatest genius in the world could not reproduce another Athene like that of Phidias. But neither must the belief be too complete. The poet's tongue stammers when he would bring beings before us who, though visible, are awful personal existences, in whose stupendous presence we one day expect to stand. As long as the conviction survives that he is dealing with literal truths, he is safe only while he follows with shoeless feet the letter of the tradition. He dares not step beyond, lest he degrade the Infinite to the human level, and if he is wise he prefers to content himself with humbler subjects. A Christian artist can represent Jesus Christ as a man because He was a man, and because the details of the Gospel history leaves room for the imagination to work. To represent Christ as the Eternal Son in heaven, to bring before us the Persons of the Trinity, consulting, planning, and reasoning, to take us into their everlasting Council-chamber, as Homer takes us into Olympus, will be possible only when Christianity ceases to be regarded as a history of true facts. Till then it is a trespass beyond the permitted limits, and revolts us by the inadequacy of the result. Either the artist fails altogether by attempting the impossible, or those whom he addresses are themselves intellectually injured by an unreal treatment of truths hitherto sacred. They confound the representation with its object, and regard to whole of it as unreal together.

These observations apply most immediately to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and are meant to explain the unsatisfactoriness of it. Milton himself was only partially emancipated from the bondage of the letter; half in earth, half "pawing to get free," like his own lion. The war in heaven, the fall of the rebel angels, the horrid splendours of Pandemonium seem legitimate subjects for Christian poetry. They stand for something which we regard as real, yet we are not bound to any actual opinions about them. Satan has no claim on reverential abstinence; and Paradise and the Fall of Man are perhaps sufficiently mythic to permit poets to take certain liberties with them. But even so far Milton has not entirely succeeded. His wars of the angels are shadowy. They have no substance, like the battles of Greeks and Trojans, or Centaurs and Lapithæ; and Satan could not be made interesting without touches of a nobler nature—that is, without ceasing to be the Satan of the Christian religion. But this is not the worst. When we are carried up into heaven, and hear the persons of the Trinity conversing on the mischiefs which have crept into the universe, and planning remedies and schemes of salvation like Puritan divines, we turn away incredulous and resentful. Theologians may form such theories for themselves, if not wisely, yet without offence. They may study the world in which they are placed with the light which can be thrown upon it by the book which they call the Word of God. They may form their conclusions, invent their

schemes of doctrine, and commend to their flocks the interpretation of the mystery at which they have arrived. The cycles and epicycles of the Ptolemaic astronomers were imperfect hypotheses, but they were stages on which the mind could rest for a more complete examination of the celestial phenomena. But the poet does not offer us phrases and formulas; he presents to us personalities, living and active, influenced by emotions and reasoning from premises; and when the unlimited and incomprehensible Being whose attributes are infinite, of whom, from the inadequacy of our ideas, we can only speak in negatives, is brought on the stage to talk like an ordinary man, we feel that Milton has mistaken the necessary limits of his art.

When Faust claims affinity with the Erdgeist, the spirit tells him to seek affinities with beings which he can comprehend. The commandment which forbade the representation of God in a bodily form, forbids the poet equally to make God describe his feelings and his purposes. Where the poet would create a character he must himself comprehend it first to its inmost fibre. He cannot comprehend his own Creator. Admire as we may *Paradise Lost;* try as we may to admire *Paradise Regained;* acknowledge as we must the splendour of the imagery and the stately march of the verse—there comes upon us irresistibly a sense of the unfitness of the subject for Milton's treatment of it. If the story which he tells us is true, it is too momentous to be played with in poetry. We prefer to hear it in plain prose, with a minimum of ornament and the utmost possible precision of statement. Milton himself had not arrived at thinking it to be a legend, a picture, like a Greek Mythology. His poem falls between two modes of treatment and two conceptions of truth; we wonder, we recite, we applaud, but something comes in between our minds and a full enjoyment, and it will not satisfy us better as time goes on.

The same objection applies to *The Holy War* of Bunyan. It is, as I said, a people's version of the same series of subjects—the creation of man, the fall of man, his redemption, his ingratitude, his lapse, and again his restoration. The chief figures are the same, the action is the same, though more varied and complicated, and the general effect is unsatisfactory from the same cause. Prose is less ambitious than poetry. There is an absence of attempts at grand effects. There is no effort after sublimity, and there is consequently a lighter sense of incongruity in the failure to reach it. On the other hand, there is the greater fulness of detail so characteristic of Bunyan's manner; and fulness of detail on a theme so far beyond our understanding is as dangerous as vague grandiloquence. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* we are among genuine human beings. The reader knows the road too well which Christian follows. He has struggled with him in the Slough of Despond. He has shuddered with him in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He has groaned with him in the dungeons of Doubting Castle. He has encountered on his journey the same fellow-travellers. Who does not know Mr. Pliable, Mr. Obstinate, Mr. Facing-

both-ways, Mr. Feeble Mind, and all the rest? They are representative realities, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. "If we prick them, they bleed; if we tickle them, they laugh;" or they make us laugh. "They are warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer" as we are. The human actors in *The Holy War* are parts of men—special virtues, special vices: allegories in fact as well as in name, which all Bunyan's genius can only occasionally substantiate into persons. The plot of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is simple. *The Holy War* is prolonged through endless vicissitudes, with a doubtful issue after all, and the incomprehensibility of the Being who allows Satan to defy him so long and so successfully is unpleasantly and harshly brought home to us. True, it is so in life. Evil remains after all that has been done for us. But life is confessedly a mystery. *The Holy War* professes to interpret the mystery, and only restates the problem in a more elaborate form. Man Friday, on reading it, would have asked, even more emphatically, "Why God not kill the devil?" and Robinson Crusoe would have found no assistance in answering him. For these reasons I cannot agree with Macaulay in thinking that, if there had been no *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War* would have been the first of religious allegories. We may admire the workmanship, but the same undefined sense of unreality which pursues us through Milton's epic would have interfered equally with the acceptance of this. The question to us is if the facts are true. If true, they require no allegories to touch either our hearts or our intellects.

The Holy War would have entitled Bunyan to a place among the masters of English literature. It would never have made his name a household word in every English-speaking family on the globe.

The story, which I shall try to tell in an abridged form, is introduced by a short prefatory poem. Works of fancy, Bunyan tells us, are of many sorts, according to the author's humour. For himself he says to his reader—

"I have something else to do
Than write vain stories thus to trouble you.
What here I say some men do know too well;
They can with tears and joy the story tell.
The town of Mansoul is well known to many,
Nor are her troubles doubted of by any
That are acquainted with those histories
That Mansoul and her wars anatomize.

"Then lend thine ears to what I do relate
Touching the town of Mansoul and her state;
How she was lost, took captive, made a slave,
And how against him set that should her save,
Yea, how by hostile ways she did oppose
Her Lord, and with his enemy did close,
For they are true; he that will them deny
Must needs the best of records vilify.

For my part, I myself was in the town
Both when 'twas set up and when pulling down.
I saw Diabolus in his possession:
And Mansoul also under his oppression:
Yea, I was there when she him owned for Lord,
And to him did submit with one accord.

"When Mansoul trampled upon things divine,
And wallowed in filth as doth a swine,
When she betook herself unto his arms,
Fought her Emmanuel, despised his charms;
Then was I there and did rejoice to see
Diabolus and Mansoul so agree.

"Let no man count me then a fable-maker,
Nor make my name or credit a partaker
Of their derision. What is here in view
Or mine own knowledge I dare say is true."

At setting out we are introduced into the famous continent of "Universe," a large and spacious country lying between the two poles—"the people of it not all of one complexion nor yet of one language, mode or way of religion, but differing as much as the planets themselves; some right, some wrong, even as it may happen to be."

In this country of "Universe" was a fair and delicate town and corporation called "Mansoul," a town for its building so curious, for its situation so commodious, for its privileges so advantageous, that with reference to its original (state) there was not its equal under heaven. The first founder was Shaddai, who built it for his own delight. In the midst of the town was a famous and stately palace which Shaddai intended for himself.* He had no intention of allowing strangers to intrude there. And the peculiarity of the place was that the walls of Mansoul † could never be broken down or hurt unless the townsmen consented. Mansoul had five gates which, in like manner, could only be forced if those within allowed it. These gates were Eargate, Eyegate, Mouthgate, Nosegate, and Feelgate. Thus provided, Mansoul was at first all that its founder could desire. It had the most excellent laws in the world. There was not a rogue or a rascal inside its whole precincts. The inhabitants were all true men.

Now there was a certain giant named Diabolus—king of the blacks or negroes, as Bunyan noticeably calls them—the negroes standing for sinners or fallen angels. Diabolus had once been a servant of Shaddai, one of the chief in his territories. Pride and ambition had led him to aspire to the crown which was settled on Shaddai's Son. He had formed a conspiracy and planned a revolution. Shaddai and his Son, "being all eye," easily detected the plot. Diabolus and his crew were bound in chains, banished, and

* Bunyan says, in a marginal note, that by this palace he means the heart.
† The body.

thrown into a pit, there to "abide for ever." This was their sentence; but out of the pit, in spite of it, they in some way contrived to escape. They ranged about full of malice against Shaddai, and looking for means to injure him. They came at last on Mansoul. They determined to take it, and called a council to consider how it could best be done. Diabolus was aware of the condition that no one could enter without the inhabitants' consent. Alecto, Apollyon, Beelzebub, Lucifer (Pagan and Christian demons intermixed indifferently) gave their several opinions. Diabolus at length, at Lucifer's suggestion, decided to assume the shape of one of the creatures over which Mansoul had dominion; and he selected as the fittest that of a snake, which at that time was in great favour with the people as both harmless and wise.

The population of Mansoul were simple, innocent folks who believed everything that was said to them. Force, however, might be necessary, as well as cunning, and the Tisiphone, a fury of the Lakes, was required to assist. The attempt was to be made at Eargate. A certain Captain Resistance was in charge of this gate, whom Diabolus feared more than any one in the place. Tisiphone was to shoot him.

The plans being all laid, Diabolus in his snake's dress approached the wall, accompanied by one Ill Pause, a famous orator, the Fury following behind. He asked for a parley with the heads of the town. Captain Resistance, two of the great nobles, Lord Innocent, and Lord Will be Will, with Mr. Conscience, the Recorder, and Lord Understanding, the Lord Mayor, came to the gate to see what they wanted. Lord Will be Will plays a prominent part in the drama both for good and evil. He is neither Free Will, nor Wilfulness, nor Inclination, but the quality which metaphysicians and theologians agree in describing as "the Will." "The Will" simply—a subtle something of great importance; but what it is they have never been able to explain.

Lord Will be Will inquired Diabolus's business. Diabolus, "meek as a lamb," said he was a neighbour of theirs. He had observed with distress that they were living in a state of slavery, and he wished to help them to be free, Shaddai was no doubt a great prince, but he was an arbitrary despot. There was no liberty where the laws were unreasonable, and Shaddai's laws were the reverse of reasonable. They had a fruit growing among them, in Mansoul, which they had to eat but to become wise. Knowledge was well known to be the best of possessions. Knowledge was freedom; ignorance was bondage; and yet Shaddai had forbidden them to touch this precious fruit.

At that moment Captain Resistance fell dead, pierced by an arrow from Tisiphone. Ill Pause made a flowing speech in the midst of which Lord Innocent fell also, either through a blow from Diabolus, or "overpowered by the stinking breath of the old villain Ill Pause." The people flew upon the apple-tree; Eargate and Eyegate were thrown open, and Diabolus was invited to come

in; when he at once became King of Mansoul, and established himself in the castle.*

The magistrates were immediately changed. Lord Understanding ceased to be Lord Mayor. Mr. Conscience was no longer left as Recorder. Diabolus built up a wall in front of Lord Understanding's palace, and shut off the light, "so that till Mansoul was delivered the old Lord Mayor was rather an impediment than an advantage to that famous town." Diabolus tried long to bring "Conscience" over to his side, but never quite succeeded. The Recorder became greatly corrupted, but he could not be prevented from now and then remembering Shaddai; and when the fit was on him he would shake the town with his exclamations. Diabolus, therefore, had to try other methods with him. "He had a way to make the old gentleman, when he was merry, unsay and deny what in his fits he had affirmed; and this was the next way to make him ridiculous, and to cause that no man should regard him." To make all secure, Diabolus often said, "Oh, Mansoul, consider that, notwithstanding the old gentleman's rage and the rattle of the high, thundering words, you hear nothing of Shaddai himself." The Recorder had pretended that the voice of the Lord was speaking in him. Had this been so, Diabolus argued that the Lord would have done more than speak. "Shaddai," he said, "valued not the loss nor the rebellion of Mansoul, nor would he trouble himself with calling his town to a reckoning."

In this way the Recorder came to be generally hated, and more than once the people would have destroyed him. Happily his house was a castle near the water-works. When the rabble pursued him, he would pull up the sluices,† let in the flood, and drown all about him.

Lord Will be Will, on the other hand, "as high born as any in Mansoul," became Diabolus's principal minister. He had been the first to propose admitting Diabolus, and he was made Captain of the Castle, Governor of the Wall, and Keeper of the Gates. Will be Will had a clerk named Mr. Mind, a man every way like his master, and Mansoul was thus brought "under the lusts" of Will and Intellect. Mr. Mind had in his house some old rent and torn parchments of the law of Shaddai. The Recorder had some more in his study; but to these Will be Will paid no attention, and surrounded himself with the officials who were all in Diabolus's interest. He had as deputy one Mr. Affection, "much debauched in his principles, so that he was called Vile Affection." Vile Affection married Mr. Mind's daughter, Carnal Lust, by whom he had three sons—Impudent, Black Mouth, and Hate Reproof; and three daughters—Scorn Truth, Slight Good, and Revenge. All traces of Shaddai were now swept away. His image, which had stood in the market-place, was taken down, and an artist called Mr. No Truth was employed to set up the image of Diabolus in place of it. Lord Lustings—"who never savoured good, but evil"—was chosen for the new Lord Mayor. Mr. Forget Good was appointed

* The Heart. † Fears.

Recorder. There were new burgesses and aldermen, all with appropriate names, for which Bunyan was never at a loss—Mr. Incredulity, Mr. Haughty, Mr. Swearing, Mr. Heardheart, Mr. Pitiless, Mr. Fury, Mr. No Truth, Mr. Stand to Lies, Mr. Falsepeace, Mr. Drunkenness, Mr. Cheating, Mr. Atheism, and another; thirteen of them in all. Mr. Incredulity was the eldest, Mr. Atheism the youngest in the company—a shrewd and correct arrangement. Diabolus, on his part, set to work to fortify Mansoul. He built three fortresses—"The Hold of Defiance" at Eyegate, "that the light might be darkened there;" "Midnight Hold" near the old Castle, to keep Mansoul from knowledge of itself; and "Sweet Sin Hold" in the market-place, that there might be no desire of good there. These strongholds being established and garrisoned, Diabolus thought that he had made his conquest secure.

So far the story runs on firmly and clearly. It is vivid, consistent in itself, and held well within the limits of human nature and experience. But, like Milton, Bunyan is now, by the exigencies of the situation, forced upon more perilous ground. He carries us into the presence of Shaddai himself, at the time when the loss of Mansoul was reported in heaven.

The king, his son, his high lords, his chief captains and nobles were all assembled to hear. There was universal grief, in which the king and his son shared, or rather seemed to share—for at once the drama of the Fall of Mankind becomes no better than a Mystery Play. "Shaddai and his son had foreseen it all long before, and had provided for the relief of Mansoul, though they told not everybody thereof—but because they would have a share in condoling of the misery of Mansoul they did, and that at the rate of the highest degree, bewail the losing of Mansoul"—"thus to show their love and compassion."

Paradise Lost was published at the time that Bunyan wrote this passage. If he had not seen it, the coincidences of treatment are singularly curious. It is equally singular, if he had seen it, that Milton should not here at least have taught him to avoid making the Almighty into a stage actor. The Father and Son consult how "to do what they had designed before." They decide that at a certain time, which they preordain, the Son, "a sweet and comely person," shall make a journey into the Universe, and lay a foundation there for Mansoul's deliverance. Milton offends in the scene less than Bunyan; but Milton cannot persuade us that it is one which should have been represented by either of them. They should have left "plans of salvation" to eloquent orators in the pulpit.

Though the day of deliverance by the method proposed was as yet far off, the war against Diabolus was to be commenced immediately. The Lord Chief Secretary was ordered to put in writing Shaddai's intentions, and cause them to be published.* Mansoul, it was announced, was to be put into a better condition than it was in before Diabolus took it.

* The Scriptures.

The report of the Council in Heaven was brought to Diabolus, who took his measures accordingly, Lord Will be Will standing by him and executing all his directions. Mansoul was forbidden to read Shaddai's proclamation. Diabolus imposed a great oath on the townspeople never to desert him; he believed that if they entered into a covenant of this kind Shaddai could not absolve them from it. They "swallowed the engagement as if it had been a sprat in the mouth of a whale." Being now Diabolus s trusty children, he gave them leave "to do whatever their appetites prompted to do." They would thus involve themselves in all kinds of wickedness, and Shaddai's son "being Holy" would be less likely to interest himself for them. When they had in this way put themselves, as Diabolus hoped, beyond reach of mercy, he informed them that Shaddai was raising an army to destroy the town. No quarter would be given, and unless they defended themselves like men they would all be made slaves. Their spirit being roused, he armed them with the shield of unbelief, "calling into question the truth of the Word." He gave them a helmet of hope —"hope of doing well at last, whatever lives they might lead;" for a breastplate a heart as hard as iron, "most necessary for all that hated Shaddai;" and another piece of most excellent armour, "a drunken and prayerless spirit that scorned to cry for mercy." Shaddai, on his side, had also prepared his forces. He will not as yet send his son. The first expedition was to fail, and was meant to fail. The object was to try whether Mansoul would return to obedience And yet Shaddai knew that it would not return to obedience. Bunyan was too ambitious to explain the inexplicable. Fifty thousand warriors were collected. all chosen by Shaddai himself. There were four leaders—Captain Boanerges, Captain Conviction, Captain Judgment, and Captain Execution—the martial saints, with whom Macaulay thinks Bunyan made acquaintance when he served. if serve he did, with Fairfax. The bearings on their banners were three black thunderbolts—the Book of the Law, wide open, with a flame of fire bursting from it; a burning, fiery furnace; and a fruitless tree with an axe at its root. These emblems represent the terrors of Mount Sinai, the covenant of works which was not to prevail.

The captains come to the walls of Mansoul. and summon the town to surrender. Their words "beat against Eargate, but without force to break it open." The new officials answer the challenge with defiance. Lord Incredulity knows not by what right Shaddai invades their country. Lord Will be Will and Mr. Forget Good warn them to be off before they rouse Diabolus. The townspeople ring the bells and dance on the walls. Will be Will double-bars the gates. Bunyan's genius is at its best in scenes of this kind. "Old Mr. Prejudice, with sixty deaf men," is appointed to take charge of Eargate. At Eargate, too. are planted two guns, called Highmind and Heady, "cast in the earth by Diabolus's head founder, whose name was Mr. Puffup."

The fighting begins, but the covenant of works makes little

progress. Shaddai's captains, when advancing on Mansoul, had fallen in with "three young fellows of promising appearance" who volunteered to go with them—"Mr. Tradition, Mr. Human Wisdom, and Mr. Man's Invention." They were allowed to join, and were placed in positions of trust, the captains of the covenant being apparently wanting in discernment. They were taken prisoners in the first skirmish, and immediately changed sides and went over to Diabolus. More battles follow. The roof of the Lord Mayor's house is beaten in. The law is not wholly ineffectual. Six of the Aldermen, the grosser moral sins—Swearing, Stand to Lies, Drunkenness, Cheating, and others—are overcome and killed. Diabolus grows uneasy, and loses his sleep. Old Conscience begins to talk again. A party forms in the town in favour of surrender, and Mr. Parley is sent to Eargate to treat for terms. The spiritual sins—False Peace, Unbelief, Haughtiness, Atheism—are still unsubdued and vigorous. The conditions offered are that Incredulity, Forget Good, and Will be Will shall retain their offices; Mansoul shall be continued in all the liberties which it enjoys under Diabolus; and a further touch is added which shows how little Bunyan sympathised with modern notions of the beauty of self-government. No new law or officer shall have any power in Mansoul without the people's consent.

Boanerges will agree to no conditions with rebels. Incredulity and Will be Will advise the people to stand by their rights, and refuse to submit to "unlimited" power. The war goes on, and Incredulity is made Diabolus's universal deputy. Conscience and Understanding, the old Recorder and Mayor, raise a mutiny, and there is a fight in the streets. Conscience is knocked down by a Diabolonian called Mr. Benumming. Understanding had a narrow escape from being shot. On he other hand, Mr. Mind, who had come over to the Conservative side, laid about bravely, tumbled old Mr. Prejudice into the dirt, and kicked him where he lay. Even Will be Will seemed to be wavering in his allegiance to Diabolus. "He smiled, and did not seem to take one side more than another." The rising, however, is put down—Understanding and Conscience are imprisoned, and Mansoul hardens its heart, chiefly "being in dread of slavery," and thinking liberty too fine a thing to be surrendered.

Shaddai's four captains find that they can do no more. The covenant of works will not answer. They send home a petition, "by the hand of that good man Mr. Love to Mansoul," to beg that some new general may come to lead them. The preordained time has now arrived, and Emmanuel himself is to take the command. He, too, selects his captains—Credence and Good Hope, Charity, and Innocence, and Patience; and the captains have their squires, the counterparts of themselves—Promise and Expectation, Pitiful, Harmless, and Suffer Long. Emmanuel's armour shines like the sun. He has forty-four battering-rams and twenty-two slings—the sixty-six books of the Bible—each made of pure gold. He throws up mounds and trenches, and arms them with his rams, five of the

largest being planted on Mount Hearken, over against Eargate. Bunyan was too reverent to imitate the Mystery Plays, and introduce a Mount Calvary with the central sacrifice upon it. The sacrifice is supposed to have been already offered elsewhere, Emmanuel offers mercy to Mansoul, and when it is rejected he threatens judgment and terror. Diabolus, being wiser than man, is made to know that his hour is approaching. He goes in person to Mouthgate to protest and remonstrate. He asks why Emmanuel is come to torment him. Mansoul has disowned Shaddai and sworn allegiance to himself. He begs Emmanuel to leave him to rule his own subjects in peace.

Emmanuel tells him "he is a thief and a liar." "When," Emmanuel is made to say, "Mansoul sinned by hearkening to thy lie, I put in and became a surety to my Father, body for body, soul for soul, that I would make amends for Mansoul's transgressions, and my Father did accept thereof. So, when the time appointed was come, I gave body for body, soul for soul, life for life, blood for blood, and so redeemed my beloved Mansoul. My Father's law and justice, that were both concerned in the threatening upon transgression, are both now satisfied, and very well content that Mansoul should be delivered."

Even against its deliverers, Mansoul was defended by the original condition of its constitution. There was no way into it but through the gates. Diabolus, feeling that Emmanuel still had difficulties before him, withdrew from the wall, and sent a messenger, Mr. Loth to Stoop, to offer alternative terms, to one or other of which he thought Emmanuel might consent. Emmanuel might be titular sovereign of all Mansoul, if Diabolus might keep the administration of part of it. If this could not be, Diabolus requested to be allowed to reside in Mansoul as a private person. If Emmanuel insisted on his own personal exclusion, at least he expected that his friends and kindred might continue to live there, and that he himself might now and then write them letters, and send them presents and messages, "in remembrance of the merry times they had enjoyed together." Finally, he would like to be consulted occasionally when any difficulties arose in Mansoul.

It will be seen that in the end Mansoul was, in fact, left liable to communications from Diabolus very much of this kind. Emmanuel's answer, however, is a peremptory No. Diabolus must take himself away, and no more must be heard of him. Seeing that there was no other resource, Diabolus resolves to fight it out. There is a great battle under the walls, with some losses on Emmanuel's side, even Captain Conviction receiving three wounds in the mouth. The shots from the gold slings mow down whole ranks of Diabolonians. Mr. Love no Good and Mr. Ill Pause are wounded. Old Prejudice and Mr. Anything run away. Lord Will be Will, who still fought for Diabolus, was never so daunted in his life: "he was hurt in the leg, and limped."

Diabolus, when the fight was over, came again to the gate with fresh proposals to Emmanuel. "I," he said, "will persuade Man-

soul to receive thee for their Lord, and I know that they will do it the sooner when they understand that I am thy deputy. I will show them wherein they have erred, and that transgression stands in the way to life. I will show them the Holy Law to which they must conform, even that which they have broken. I will press upon them the necessity of a reformation according to thy law. At my own cost I will set up and maintain a sufficient ministry, besides lecturers, in Mansoul." This obviously means the Established Church. Unable to keep mankind directly in his own service, the devil offers to entangle them in the covenant of works, of which the Church of England was the representative. Emmanuel rebukes him for his guile and deceit. "I will govern Mansoul," he says, "by new laws, new officers, new motives, and new ways. I will pull down the town and build it again, and it shall be as though it had not been, and it shall be the glory of the whole universe."

A second battle follows. Eargate is beaten in. The Prince's army enters and advances as far as the old Recorder's house, where they knock and demand entrance. "The old gentleman, not fully knowing their design, had kept his gates shut all the time of the fight. He as yet knew nothing of the great designs of Emmanuel, and could not tell what to think." The door is violently broken open, and the house is made Emmanuel's headquarters. The townspeople, with Conscience and Understanding at their head, petition that their lives may be spared; but Emmanuel gives no answer, Captain Boanerges and Captain Conviction carrying terror into all hearts. Diabolus, the cause of all the mischief, had retreated into the castle.* He came out at last, and surrendered, and in dramatic fitness he clearly ought now to have been made away with in a complete manner. Unfortunately, this could not be done. He was stripped of his armour, bound to Emmanuel's chariot-wheels, and thus turned out of Mansoul "into parched places in a salt land, where he might seek rest and find none." The salt land proved as insecure a prison for this embarrassing being as the pit where he was to have abode forever.

Meanwhile, Mansoul being brought upon its knees, the inhabitants were summoned into the castle-yard, when Conscience, Understanding, and Will be Will were committed to ward. They and the rest again prayed for mercy, but again without effect. Emmanuel was silent. They drew another petition, and asked Captain Conviction to present it for them. Captain Conviction declined to be an advocate for rebels, and advised them to send it by one of themselves, with a rope about his neck. Mr. Desires Awake went with it. The Prince took it from his hands, and wept as Desires Awake gave it in. Emmanuel bade him go his way till the request could be considered. The unhappy criminals knew not how to take the answer. Mr. Understanding thought it promised well Conscience and Will be Will, borne down by

* The heart.

shame for their sins, looked for nothing but immediate death. They tried again. They threw themselves on Emmanuel's mercy. They drew up a confession of their horrible iniquities. This, at least, they wished to offer to him whether he would pity them or not. For a messenger some of them thought of choosing one Old Good Deed. Conscience, however, said that would never do. Emmanuel would answer, "Is Old Good Deed yet alive in Mansoul? Then let Old Good Deed save it." Desires Awake went again with the rope on his neck, as Captain Conviction recommended. Mr. Wet Eyes went with him, wringing his hands.

Emmanuel still held out no comfort; he promised merely that in the camp the next morning he would give such an answer as should be to his glory. Nothing but the worst was now looked for. Mansoul passed the night in sackcloth and ashes. When day broke, the prisoners dressed themselves in mourning, and were carried to the camp in chains, with ropes on their necks, beating their breasts. Prostrate before Emmanuel's throne, they repeated their confession. They acknowledged that death and the bottomless pit would be no more than a just retribution for their crimes. As they excused nothing and promised nothing, Emmanuel at once delivered them their pardons sealed with seven seals. He took off their ropes and mourning, clothed them in shining garments, and gave them chains and jewels.

Lord Will be Will "swooned outright." When he recovered, "the Prince" embraced and kissed him. The bells in Mansoul were set ringing. Bonfires blazed. Emmanuel reviewed his army; and Mansoul, ravished at the sight, prayed him to remain and be their King for ever. He entered the city again in triumph, the people strewing boughs and flowers before him. The streets and squares were rebuilt on a new model. Lord Will be Will, now regenerate, resumed the charge of the gates. The old Lord Mayor was reinstated. Mr. Knowledge was made Recorder, "not out of contempt for old Conscience, who was by-and-bye to have another employment." Diabolus's image was taken down and broken to pieces, and the inhabitants of Mansoul were so happy that they sang of Emmanuel in their sleep.

Justice, however, remained to be done on the hardened and impenitent.

There were "perhaps necessities in the nature of things," as Bishop Butler says, and an example could not be made of the principal offender. But his servants and old officials were lurking in the lanes and alleys. They were apprehended, thrown into gaol, and brought to formal trial. Here we have Bunyan at his best. The scene in the court rises to the level of the famous trial of Faithful in Vanity Fair. The prisoners were Diabolus's Aldermen—Mr. Atheism, Mr. Incredulity, Mr. Lustings, Mr. Forget Good, Mr. Hardheart, Mr. Falsepeace, and the rest. The proceedings were precisely what Bunyan must have witnessed at a common English Assizes. The Judges were the new Recorder and the new Mayor. Mr. Do-right was Town Clerk. A jury was

empanelled in the usual way. Mr. Knowall, Mr. Telltrue, and Mr. Hatelies were the principal witnesses.

Atheism was first brought to the bar, being charged "with having pertinaciously and doltingly taught that there was no God." He pleaded Not Guilty. Mr. Knowall was placed in the witness-box and sworn.

"My Lord," he said, "I know the prisoner at the bar. I and he were once in Villains' Lane together, and he at that time did briskly talk of diverse opinions. And then and there I heard him say that for his part he did believe that there was no God. 'But,' said he, 'I can profess one and be religious too, if the company I am in and the circumstances of other things,' said he, 'shall put me upon it.'"

Telltrue and Hatelies were next called.

"*Telltrue.* My Lord, I was formerly a great companion of the prisoner's, for the which I now repent me; and I have often heard him say, and with very great stomach-fulness, that he believed there was neither God, Angel, nor Spirit.

"*Town Clerk.* Where did you hear him say so?

"*Telltrue.* In Blackmouth Lane and in Blasphemers' Row, and in many other places besides.

"*Town Clerk.* Have you much knowledge of him?

"*Telltrue.* I know him to be a Diabolonian, the son of a Diabolonian, and a horrible man to deny a Deity. His father's name was Never be Good, and he had more children than this Atheism.

"*Town Clerk.* Mr. Hatelies. Look upon the prisoner at the bar. Do you know him.

"*Hatelies.* My Lord, this Atheism is one of the vilest wretches that ever I came near or had to do with in my life. I have heard him say that there is no God. I have heard him say that there is no world to come, no sin, nor punishment hereafter; and, moreover, I have heard him say that it was as good to go to a bad-house as to go to hear a sermon.

"*Town Clerk.* Where did you hear him say these things?

"*Hatelies.* In Drunkards' Row, just at Rascal Lane's End, at a house in which Mr. Impiety lived."

The next prisoner was Mr. Lustings, who said that he was of high birth, and "used to pleasures and pastimes of greatness." He had always been allowed to follow his own inclinations, and it seemed strange to him that he should be called in question for things which not only he but every man secretly or openly approved.

When the evidence had been heard against him he admitted frankly its general correctness.

"I," he said, "was ever of opinion that the happiest life that a man could live on earth was to keep himself back from nothing that he desired; nor have I been false at any time to this opinion of mine, but have lived in the love of my notions all days. Nor was I ever so churlish, having found such sweetness in them myself, as to keep the commendation of them from others."

Then came Mr. Incredulity. He was charged with having

encouraged the town of Mansoul to resist Shaddai. Incredulity, too, had the courage of his opinions.

"I know not Shaddai," he said. "I love my old Prince. I thought it my duty to be true to my trust, and to do what I could to possess the minds of the men of Mansoul to do their utmost to resist strangers and foreigners, and with might to fight against them. Nor have I nor shall I change my opinion for fear of trouble, though you at present are possessed of place and power."

Forget Good pleaded age and craziness. He was the son of a Diabolonian called Love Naught. He had uttered blasphemous speeches in Allbase Lane, next door to the sign of "Conscience Seared with a Hot Iron;" also in Flesh Lane, right opposite the Church; also in Nauseous Street; also at the sign of the "Reprobate," next door to the "Descent into the Pit."

Falsepeace insisted that he was wrongly named in the indictment. His real name was Peace, and he had always laboured for peace. When war broke out between Shaddai and Diabolus, he had endeavoured to reconcile them, &c. Evidence was given that Falsepeace was his right designation. His father's name was Flatter. His mother, before she married Flatter, was called Mrs. Sootheup. When her child was born she always spoke of him as Falsepeace. She would call him twenty times a day, my little Falsepeace, my pretty Falsepeace, my sweet rogue Falsepeace! &c.

The court rejected his plea. He was told "that he had wickedly maintained the town of Mansoul in rebellion against its king, in a false, lying, and damnable peace, contrary to the law of Shaddai. Peace that was not a companion of truth and holiness, was an accursed and treacherous peace, and was grounded on a lie.

No Truth had assisted with his own hands in pulling down the image of Shaddai. He had set up the horned image of the beast Diabolus at the same place, and had torn and consumed all that remained of the laws of the king.

Pitiless said his name was not Pitiless, but Cheer Up. He disliked to see Mansoul inclined to melancholy, and that was all his offence. Pitiless, however, was proved to be the name of him. It was a habit of the Diabolonians to assume counterfeit appellations. Covetousness called himself Good Husbandry; Pride called himself Handsome; and so on.

Mr. Haughty's figure is admirably drawn in a few lines. Mr. Haughty, when arraigned, declared "that he had carried himself bravely, not considering who was his foe, or what was the cause in which he was engaged. It was enough for him if he fought like a man and came off victorious."

The jury, it seems, made no distinctions between opinions and acts. They did not hold that there was any divine right in man to think what he pleased, and to say what he thought. Bunyan had suffered as a martyr; but it was as a martyr for truth, not for general license. The genuine Protestants never denied that it was right to prohibit men from teaching lies, and to punish them if they

disobeyed. The persecution of which they complained was the persecution of the honest man by the knave.

All the prisoners were found guilty by a unanimous verdict. Even Mr. Moderate, who was one of the jury, thought a man must be wilfully blind who wished to spare them. They were sentenced to be executed the next day. Incredulity contrived to escape in the night. Search was made for him, but he was not to be found in Mansoul. He had fled beyond the walls, and had joined Diabolus near Hell Gate. The rest, we are told, were crucified—crucified by the hands of the men of Mansoul themselves. They fought and struggled at the place of execution so violently that Shaddai's secretary was obliged to send assistance. But justice was done at last, and all the Diabolonians, except Incredulity, were thus made an end of.

They were made an end of for a time only. Mansoul, by faith in Christ, and by the help of the Holy Spirit, had crucified all manner of sin in its members. It was faith that had now the victory. Unbelief had, unfortunately, escaped. It had left Mansoul for the time, and had gone to its master the devil. But unbelief, being intellectual, had not been crucified with the sins of the flesh, and thus could come back, and undo the work which faith had accomplished. I do not know how far this view approves itself to the more curious theologians. Unbelief itself is said to be a product of the will; but an allegory must not be cross-questioned too minutely.

The cornucopia of spiritual blessings was now opened on Mansoul. All offences was fully and completely forgiven. A Holy Law and Testament was bestowed on the people for their comfort and consolation, with a portion of the grace which dwelt in the hearts of Shaddai and Emmanuel themselves. They were to be allowed free access to Emmanuel's palace at all seasons, he himself undertaking to hear them and redress their grievances, and they were empowered and enjoined to destroy all Diabolonians who might be found at any time within their precincts.

These grants were embodied in a charter which was set up in gold letters on the castle door. Two ministers were appointed to carry on the government—one from Shaddai's court; the other a native of Mansoul. The first was Shaddai's Chief Secretary, the Holy Spirit. He, if they were obedient and well-conducted, would be "ten times better to them than the whole world." But they were cautioned to be careful of their behaviour, for if they grieved him he would turn against them, and the worst might then be looked for. The second minister was the old Recorder, Mr. Conscience, for whom, as was said, a new office had been provided. The address of Emmanuel to Conscience. in handing his commission to him, contains the essence of Bunyan's creed:

"Thou must confine thyself to the teaching of moral virtues, to civil and natural duties. But thou must not attempt to presume to be a revealer of those high and supernatural mysteries that are kept close in the bosom of Shaddai, my father. For those things knows

no man; nor can any reveal them but my father's secretary only . . . In all high and supernatural things thou must go to him for information and knowledge. Wherefore keep low and be humble; and remember that the Diabolonians that kept not their first charge, but left their own standing, are now made prisoners in the pit. Be therefore content with thy station. I have made thee my father's vicegerent on earth in the things of which I have made mention before. Take thou power to teach them to Mansoul; yea to impose them with whips and chastisements if they shall not willingly hearken to do thy commandments. . . . And one thing more to my beloved Mr. Recorder, and to all the town of Mansoul. You must not dwell in nor stay upon anything of that which he hath in commission to teach you, as to your trust and expectation of the next world. Of the next world, I say; for I purpose to give another to Mansoul when this is worn out. But for that you must wholly and solely have recourse to and make stay upon the doctrine of your teacher of the first order. Yea, Mr. Recorder himself must look for life from that which he himself revealeth. His dependence for that must be founded in the doctrine of the other preacher. Let Mr. Recorder also take heed that he receive not any doctrine or points of doctrine that are not communicated to him by his superior teacher, nor yet within the precincts of his own formal knowledge."

Here, as a work of art, *The Holy War* should have its natural end. Mansoul had been created pure and happy. The devil plotted against it, took it, defiled it. The Lord of the town came to the rescue, drove the devil out, executed his officers and destroyed his works. Mansoul, according to Emmanuel's promise, was put into a better condition than that in which it was originally placed. New laws were drawn for it. New ministers were appointed to execute them. Vice had been destroyed. Unbelief had been driven away. The future lay serene and bright before it; all trials and dangers being safely passed. Thus we have all the parts of a complete drama—the fair beginning, the perils, the struggles, and the final victory of good. At this point, for purposes of art, the curtain ought to fall.

For the purposes of art—not, however, for purposes of truth; for the drama of Mansoul was still incomplete, and will remain incomplete till man puts on another nature or ceases altogether to be. Christianity might place him in a new relation to his Maker, and, according to Bunyan, might expel the devil out of his heart. But for practical purposes, as Mansoul too well knows, the devil is still in possession. At intervals—as in the first centuries of the Christian era, for a period in the middle ages, and again in Protestant countries for another period at the Reformation—mankind made noble efforts to drive him out, and make the law of God into reality. But he comes back again, and the world is again as it was. The vices again flourish which had been nailed to the Cross. The statesmen find it as little possible as ever to take moral right and justice for his rule in politics. The Evangelical preacher continues

to confess and deplore the desperate wickedness of the human heart. The devil had been deposed, but his faithful subjects have restored him to his throne. The stone of Sisyphus has been brought to the brow of the hill only to rebound again to the bottom. The old battle has to be fought a second time, and, for all we can see, no closing victory will ever be in "this country or Universe." Bunyan knew this but too well. He tries to conceal it from himself by treating Mansoul alternately as the soul of a single individual from which the devil may be so expelled as never dangerously to come back, or as the collective souls of the Christian world. But, let him mean which of the two he will, the overpowering fact remains that, from the point of view of his own theology, the great majority of mankind are the devil's servants through life, and are made over to him everlastingly when their lives are over; while the human race itself continues to follow its idle amusements and its sinful pleasures as if no Emmanuel had ever come from heaven to rescue it. Thus the situation is incomplete, and the artistic treatment necessarily unsatisfactory—nay, in a sense even worse than unsatisfactory—for the attention of the reader, being reawakened by the fresh and lively treatment of the subject, refuses to be satisfied with conventional explanatory commonplaces. His mind is puzzled; his faith wavers in its dependence upon a Being who can permit His work to be spoilt, His power defied, His victories even, when won, made useless.

Thus we take up the continuation of *The Holy War* with a certain weariness and expectation of disappointment. The delivery of Mansoul has not been finished after all, and, for all that we can see, the struggle between Shaddai and Diabolus may go on to eternity. Emmanuel before he withdraws his presence, warns the inhabitants that many Diabolonians are still lurking about the outwalls of the town.* The names are those in St. Paul's list—Fornication, Adultery, Murder, Anger, Lasciviousness, Deceit, Evil Eye, Drunkenness, Revelling, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Sedition, Heresy. If all these was still abroad, not much had been gained by the crucifixion of the Aldermen. For the time, it was true, they did not show themselves openly. Mansoul afrer the conquest was clothed in white linen, and was in a state of peace and glory. But the linen was speedily soiled again. Mr. Carnal Security became a great person in Mansoul. The Chief Secretary's functions fell early into abeyance. He discovered the Recorder and Lord Will be Will at dinner in Mr. Carnal Security's parlour, and ceased to communicate with them. Mr. Godly Fear souned an alarm, and Mr. Carnal Security's house was burned by the mob; but Mansoul's backslidings grew worse. It had its fits of repentance, and petititioned Emmanuel, but the messenger could have no admittance. The Lusts of the Flesh came out of their dens. They held a meeting in the room of Mr. Mischief, and wrote to invite Diabolus to return. Mr. Profane carried their letter to Hell Gate. Cerberus, opened it, and a cry of

* The Flesh.

Joy ran through the prison. Beelzebub, Lucifer, Apollyon, and the rest of the devils came crowding to hear the news. Deadman's bell was rung. Diabolus addressed the assembly, putting them in hopes of recovering their prize. "Nor need you fear, he said, that if ever we get Mansoul again, we after that shall be cast out any more. It is the law of that Prince that now they own, that if we get them a second time they shall be ours forever." He returned a warm answer to his friend, "which was subscribed as given at the Pit's mouth, by the joint consent of all the Princes of Darkness, by me, Diabolus." The plan was to corrupt Mansoul's morals, and three devils of rank set off disguised to take service in the town, and make their way into the households of Mr. Mind, Mr. Godly Fear, and Lord Will be Will. Godly Fear discovered his mistake, and turned the devil out. The other two established themselves successfully, and Mr. Profane was soon at Hell Gate again to report progress. Cerberus welcomed him with a "St. Mary, I am glad to see thee." Another council was held in Pandemonium, and Diabolus was impatient to show himself again on the scene. Apollyon advised him not to be in a hurry. "Let our friends," he said, "draw Mansoul more and more into sin—there is nothing like sin to devour Mansoul;" but Diabolus would not wait for so slow a process, and raised an army of Doubters "from the land of Doubting, on the confines of Hell Gate Hill." "Doubt," Bunyan always admitted, had been his own most dangerous enemy.

Happily the towns-people became aware of the peril which threatened them. Mr. Prywell, a great lover of Mansoul, overheard some Diabolonians talking about it at a place called Vile Hill. He carried his information to the Lord Mayor; the Recorder rang the Alarm Bell; Mansoul flew to penitence, held a day of fasting and humiliation, and prayed to Shaddai. The Diabolonians were hunted out, and all that could be found were killed. So far as haste and alarm would permit, Mansoul mended its ways. But on came the Doubting army, led by Incredulity, who had escaped crucifixion—"none was truer to Diabolus than he"—on they came under their several captains, Vocation Doubters, Grace Doubters, Salvation Doubters, &c.; figures now gone to shadow; then the deadliest foes of every English Puritan soul. Mansoul appealed to the Chief Secretary; but the Chief Secretary "had been grieved," and would have nothing to say to it. The town legions went out to meet the invaders with good words, Prayer, and singing of Psalms. The Doubters replied with "horrible objections," which were frightfully effective. Lord Reason was wounded in the head, and the Lord Mayor in the eye; Mr. Mind received a shot in the stomach, and Conscience was hit near the heart; but the wounds were not mortal. Mansoul had the best of it in the first engagement. Terror was followed by boasting and self-confidence; a night sally was attempted—night being the time when the Doubters were strongest. The sally failed, and the men of Mansoul were turned to rout. Diabolus's army attacked Eargate, stormed the walls, forced their way into the town, and cap-

tured the whole of it except the castle. Then "Mansoul became a den of dragons, an emblem of Hell, a place of total darkness." "Mr. Conscience's wounds so festered that he could have no rest day or night." "Now a man might have walked for days together in Mansoul, and scarce have seen one in the town that looked like a religious man. Oh, the fearful state of Mansoul now!" "Now every corner swarmed with outlandish Doubters; Red Coats and Black Coats walked the town by clusters, and filled the houses with hideous noises, lying stories, and blasphemous language against Shaddai and his Son."

This is evidently meant for fashionable London in the time of Charles II. Bunyan was loyal to the King. He was no believer in moral regeneration through political revolution. But none the less he could see what was under his eyes, and he knew what to think of it.

All was not lost, for the castle still held out. The only hope was in Emmanuel, and the garrison proposed to petition again in spite of the ill-reception of their first messengers. Godly Fear reminded them that no petition would be received which was not signed by the Lord Secretary, and that the Lord Secretary would sign nothing which he had not himself drawn up. The Lord Secretary, when appealed to in the proper manner, no longer refused his assistance. Captain Credence flew up to Shaddai's court with the simple words that Mansoul renounced all trust in its own strength and relied upon its Saviour. This time its prayer would be heard.

The devils, meanwhile, triumphant though they were, discovered that they could have no permanent victory unless they could reduce the castle. "Doubters at a distance," Beelzebub said, "are but like objections repelled by argument. Can we but get them into the hold, and make them possessors of that, the day will be our own." The object was, therefore, to corrupt Mansoul at the heart.

Then follows a very curious passage. Bunyan had still his eye on England, and had discerned the quarter from which her real danger would approach. Mansoul, the devil perceived, "was a market-town, much given to commerce." "It would be possible to dispose of some of the devil's wares there." The people would be filled full, and made rich, and would forget Emmanuel. "Mansoul," they said, "shall be so cumbered with abundance that they shall be forced to make their castle a warehouse." Wealth once made the first object of existence, "Diabolus's gang will have easy entrance, and the castle will be our own."

Political economy was still sleeping in the womb of futurity. Diabolus was unable to hasten its birth, and an experiment which Bunyan thought would certainly have succeeded was not to be tried. The *Deus ex Machinâ* appeared with its flaming sword. The Doubting army was cut to pieces, and Mansoul was saved. Again, however, the work was imperfectly done. Diabolus, like the bad genius in the fairy tale, survived for fresh mischief. Diabolus

flew off again to Hell Gate, and was soon at the head of a new host; part composed of fugitive Doubters whom he rallied, and part of a new set of enemies called *Bloodmen*, by whom we are to understand persecutors, "a people from a land that lay under the Dog Star." "Captain Pope" was chief of the Bloodmen. His escutcheon "was the stake, the flame, and good men in it." The Bloodmen had done Diabolus wonderful service in time past. "Once they had forced Emmanuel out of the Kingdom of the Universe, and why, thought he, might they not do it again?"

Emmanuel did not this time go in person to the encounter. It was enough to send his captains. The Doubters fled at the first onset. "The Bloodmen, when they saw that no Emmanuel was in the field, concluded that no Emmanuel was in Mansoul. Wherefore, they, looking upon what the captains did to be, as they called it, a fruit of the extravagancy of their wild and foolish fancies, rather despised them than feared them." "They proved, nevertheless, chicken-hearted, when they saw themselves matched and equalled." The chiefs were taken prisoners, and brought to trial like Atheism and his companions, and so, with an address from the Prince, the story comes to a close.

Thus at last *The Holy War* ends, or seems to end. It is as if Bunyan had wished to show that though the converted Christian was still liable to the assaults of Satan, and even to be beaten down and overcome by him, his state was never afterwards so desperate as it had been before the redemption, and that he had assistance ready at hand to save him when near extremity. But the reader whose desire it is that good shall triumph, and evil be put to shame and overthrown, remains but partially satisfied; and the last conflict and its issues leaves Mansoul still subject to fresh attacks. Diabolus was still at large. Carnal Sense broke prison and continued to lurk in the town. Unbelief "was a nimble Jack: him they could never lay hold of, though they attempted to do it often." Unbelief remained in Mansoul till the time that Mansoul ceased to dwell in the country of the Universe; and where Unbelief was, Diabolus would not be without a friend to open the gates to him. Bunyan says, indeed, that "he was stoned as often as he showed himself in the streets." He shows himself in the streets much at his ease in these days of ours after two more centuries.

Here lies the real weakness of *The Holy War*. It may be looked at either as the war in the soul of each sinner that is saved, or as the war for the deliverance of humanity. Under the first aspect it leaves out of sight the large majority of mankind who are not supposed to be saved, and out of whom, therefore, Diabolus is not driven at all. Under the other aspect the struggle is still unfinished: the last act of the drama has still to be played, and we know not what the conclusion is to be.

To attempt to represent it, therefore, as a work of art, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, is necessarily a failure. The mysteries and contradictions which the Christian revelation leaves unsolved are made tolerable to us by Hope. We are prepared to

find in religion many things which we cannot understand; and difficulties do not perplex us so long as they remain in a form to which we are accustomed. To emphasise the problem by offering it to us in an allegory, of which we are presumed to possess a key, serves only to revive Man Friday's question, or the old dilemma which neither intellect nor imagination has ever dealt with successfully. "Deus aut non vult tollere mala, aut nequit. Si non vult non est bonus. Si nequit non est omnipotens." It is wiser to confess with Butler that "there may be necessities in the nature of these things which we are not acquainted with."

CHAPTER IX.

"THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

If *The Holy War* is an unfit subject for allegorical treatment, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is no less perfectly adapted for it. *The Holy War* is a representation of the struggle of human nature with evil, and the struggle is left undecided. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a representation of the efforts of a single soul after holiness, which has its natural termination when the soul quits its mortal home and across the dark river. Each one of us has his own life-battle to fight out, his own sorrows and trials, his own failures or successes, and his own end. He wins the game, or he loses it. The account is wound up, and the curtains falls upon him. Here Bunyan had a material as excellent in itself as it was exactly suited to his peculiar genius; and his treatment of the subject from his own point of view—that of English Protestant Christianity—is unequalled, and never will be equalled. I may say never, for in this world of change the point of view alters fast, and never continues in one stay. As we are swept along the stream of time, lights and shadows shift their places, mountain plateaus turn to sharp peaks, mountain ranges dissolve into vapour. The river which has been gliding deep and slow along the plain, leaps suddenly over a precipice and plunges foaming down a sunless gorge. In the midst of changing circumstances the central question remains the same—What am I? what is this world, in which I appear and disappear like a bubble? who made me? and what am I to do? Some answer or other the mind of man demands and insists on receiving. Theologian or poet offers, at long intervals, explanations which are accepted as credible for a time. They wear out, and another follows, and then another. Bunyan's answer has served average English men and women for two hundred years, but no human being with Bunyan's intellect and Bunyan's sincerity can again use similar language; and *The Pilgrim's Progress* is and will remain unique of its kind—an imperishable monument of the form in which the problem presented itself to a person of singular truthfulness, simplicity, and piety, who, after many struggles, accepted the Puritan creed as the adequate solution of it. It was composed exactly at the time when it was possible for such a book to come into being—the close of the period when the Puritan formula was a real

belief, and was about to change from a living principle into an intellectual opinion. So long as a religion is fully alive, men do not talk about it or make allegories about it. They assume its truth as out of reach of question, and they simply obey its precepts as they obey the law of the land. It becomes a subject of art and discourse only when men are unconsciously ceasing to believe, and therefore the more vehemently think that they believe, and repudiate with indignation the suggestion that doubt has found its way into them. After this, religion no longer governs their lives. It governs only the language in which they express themselves, and they preserve it eagerly, in the shape of elaborate observances or in the agreeable forms of art and literature.

The Pilgrim's Progress was written before *The Holy War*, while Bunyan was still in prison at Bedford, and was but half conscious of the gifts which he possessed. It was written for his own entertainment, and therefore without the thought—so fatal in its effects and so hard to be resisted—of what the world would say about it. It was written in compulsory quiet, when he was comparatively unexcited by the effort of perpetual preaching, and the shapes of things could present themselves to him as they really were undistorted by the theological narrowness. It is the same story which he has told of himself in *Grace Abounding*, thrown out in an objective form.

He tells us himself, in a metrical introduction, the circumstances under which it was composed:—

"When at the first I took my pen in hand
Thus for to write, I did not understand
That I at all should make a little book
In such a mode. Nay, I had undertook
To make another, which when almost done,
Before I was aware I this begun.

"And thus it was: I writing of the way
And race of saints in this our Gospel day,
Fell suddenly into an Allegory
About the journey and the way to glory
In more than twenty things which I set down;
This done, I twenty more had in my crown,
And these again began to multiply,
Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly.
Nay then, thought I, if that you breed so fast,
I'll put you by yourselves, lest you at last
Should prove *ad Infinitum*, and eat out
The book that I already am about.

"Well, so I did; but yet I did not think
To show to all the world my pen and ink
In such a mode. I only thought to make,
I knew not what. Nor did I undertake
Merely to please my neighbours; no, not I.
I did it mine own self to gratify.

"Neither did I but vacant seasons spend
In this my scribble; nor did I intend
But to divert myself in doing this
From worser thoughts which make me do amiss.
Thus I set pen to paper with delight,
And quickly had my thoughts in black and white;
For having now my method by the end,
Still as I pulled it came; and so I penned
It down: until at last it came to be
For length and breadth the bigness which you see.

"Well, when I had thus put my ends together,
I showed them others, that I might see whether
They would condemn them or them justify.
And some said, Let them live; some, Let them die;
Some said, John, print it; others said, Not so;
Some said it might do good; others said, No.

"Now was I in a strait, and did not see
Which was the best thing to be done by me.
At last I thought, since you are thus divided,
I print it will; and so the case decided."

The difference of opinion among Bunyan's friends is easily explicable. The allegoric representation of religion to men profoundly convinced of the truth of it might naturally seem light and fantastic, and the breath of the conception could not please the narrow sectarians who knew no salvation beyond the lines of their peculiar formulas. The Pilgrim, though in a Puritan dress, is a genuine man. His experience is so truly human experience, that Christians of every persuasion can identify themselves with him; and even those who regard Christianity itself as but a natural outgrowth of the conscience and intellect, and yet desire to live nobly and make the best of themselves, can recognise familiar footprints in every step of Christian's journey. Thus *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a book which, when once read, can never be forgotten. We too, every one of us, are pilgrims on the same road, and images and illustrations come back upon us from so faithful an itinerary, as we encounter similar trials, and learn for ourselves the accuracy with which Bunyan has described them. There is no occasion to follow a story minutely which memory can so universally supply. I need pause only at a few spots which are too charming to pass by.

How picturesque and vivid are the opening lines:

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world I lighted on a certain place where there was a den,* and I laid me down in that place to sleep, and as I slept I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man, a man clothed in rags, standing with his face from his own home with a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back."

The man is Bunyan himself as we see him in *Grace Abounding.*

* The Bedford Prison.

His sins are the burden upon his back. He reads his book and weeps and trembles. He speaks of his fears to his friends and kindred. They think "some frenzy distemper has got into his head." He meets a man in the fields whose name is Evangelist. Evangelist tells him to flee from the City of Destruction. He shows him the way by which he must go, and points to the far-off light which will guide him to the wicket-gate. He sets off, and his neighbours of course think him mad. The world always thinks men mad who turn their backs upon it. Obstinate and Pliable (how well we know them both!) follow to persuade him to return. Obstinate talks practical common sense to him, and, as it has no effect, gives him up as a fantastical fellow. Pliable thinks that there may be something in what he says, and offers to go with him.

Before they can reach the wicket-gate they fall into a "miry slough." Who does not know the miry slough too? When a man begins for the first time to think seriously about himself, the first thing that rises before him is a consciousness of his miserable past life. Amendment seems to be desperate. He thinks it is too late to change for any useful purpose, and he sinks into despondency.

Pliable, finding the road disagreeable, has soon had enough of it. He scrambles out of the slough "on the side which was nearest to his own house" and goes home. Christian, struggling manfully, is lifted out "by a man whose name was Help," and goes on upon his journey, but the burden on his back weighs him down. He falls in with Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who lives in the town of Carnal Policy. Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who looks like a gentleman, advises him not to think about his sins. If he has done wrong he must alter his life and do better for the future. He directs him to a village called Morality, where he will find a gentleman well known in those parts, who will take his burden off—Mr. Legality. Either Mr. Legality will do it himself, or it can be done equally well by his pretty young son, Mr. Civility.

The way to a better life does not lie in a change of outward action, but in a changed heart. Legality soon passes into civility, according to the saying that vice loses half its evil when it loses its grossness. Bunyan would have said that the poison was the more deadly from being concealed. Christian, after a near escape, is set straight again. He is admitted into the wicket-gate, and is directed how he is to go forward. He asks if he may not lose his way. He is answered Yes, "There are many ways (that) butt down on this, and they are crooked and wide. But thus thou mayest know the right from the wrong, that only being straight and narrow."

Good people often suppose that when a man is once "converted," as they call it, and has entered on a religious life, he will find everything made easy. He has turned to Christ, and in Christ he will find rest and pleasantness. The path of duty is unfortunately not strewed with flowers at all. The primrose road leads to the other place. As on all other journeys, to persevere is the difficulty. The pilgrim's feet grow sorer the longer he walks. His lower

nature follows him like a shadow, watching opportunities to trip him up, and ever appearing in some new disguise. In the way of comfort he is allowed only certain resting-places, quiet intervals of peace when temptation is absent, and the mind can gather strength and encouragement from a sense of the progress which it has made.

The first of these resting-places at which Christian arrives is the "Interpreter's House." This means, I conceive, that he arrives at a right understanding of the objects of human desire as they really are. He learns to distinguish there between passion and patience, passion which demands immediate gratification, and patience which can wait and hope. He sees the action of grace on the heart, and sees the devil labouring to put it out. He sees the man in the iron cage who was once a flourishing professor, but had been tempted away by pleasure and had sinned against light. He hears a dream too—one of Bunyan's own early dreams, but related as by another person. The Pilgrim himself was beyond the reach of such uneasy visions. But it shows how profoundly the terrible side of Christianity had seized on Bunyan's imagination, and how little he was able to forget it.

"This night as I was in my sleep I dreamed, and behold the heavens grew exceeding black; also it thundered and lightened in most fearful wise, that it put me into an agony; so I looked up in my dream and saw the clouds rack at an unusual rate, upon which I heard a great sound of a trumpet, and saw also a man sit upon a cloud attended with the thousands of heaven. They were all in a flaming fire, and the heaven also was in a burning flame. I heard then a voice, saying, Arise ye dead and come to judgment; and with that the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the dead that were therein came forth. Some of them were exceeding glad and looked upward; some sought to hide themselves under the mountains. Then I saw the man that sate upon the cloud open the book and bid the world draw near. Yet there was, by reason of a fierce flame that issued out and came from before him, a convenient distance betwixt him and them, as betwixt the judge and the prisoners at the bar. I heard it also proclaimed to them that attended on the man that sate on the cloud, Gather together the tares, the chaff, and the stubble, and cast them into the burning lake. And with that the bottomless pit opened just whereabouts I stood, out of the mouth of which there came in an abundant manner smoke and coals of fire with hideous noises. It was also said to the same persons, Gather the wheat into my garner. And with that I saw many catched up and carried away into the clouds, but I was left behind. I also sought to hide myself, but I could not, for the man that sate upon the cloud still kept his eye upon me. My sins also came into my mind, and my conscience did accuse me on every side. I thought the day of judgment was come, and I was not ready for it."

The resting-time comes to an end. The Pilgrim gathers himself together, and proceeds upon his way. He is not to be burdened

for ever with the sense of his sins. It fell from off his back at the sight of the cross. Three shining ones appear and tell him that his sins are forgiven; they take off his rags and provide him with a new suit.

He now encounters fellow-travellers; and the seriousness of the story is relieved by adventures and humorous conversations. At the bottom of the hill he finds three gentlemen asleep, "a little out of the way." These were Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. He tries to rouse them, but does not succeed. Presently two others are seen tumbling over the Wall into the Narrow Way. They are come from the land of Vain Glory, and are called Formalist and Hypocrisy. Like the Pilgrim, they are bound for Mount Zion; but the wicket-gate was "too far about," and they had come by a short cut. "They had custom for it a thousand years and more; and custom being of so long standing, would be admitted legal by any impartial judge." Whether right or wrong, they insist that they are in the way, and no more is to be said. But they are soon out of it again. The hill is the hill Difficulty, and the road parts into three. Two go round the bottom, as modern engineers would make them. The other rises straight over the top. Formalist and Hypocrisy choose the easy ways, and are heard of no more. Pilgrim climbs up, and after various accidents comes to the second resting-place, the Palace Beautiful, built by the Lord of the Hill to entertain strangers in. The recollections of Sir Bevis, of Southampton, furnished Bunyan with his framework. Lions guard the court. Fair ladies entertain him as if he had been a knight-errant in quest of the Holy Grail. The ladies, of course, are all that they ought to be: the Christian graces,—Discretion, Prudence, Piety, and Charity. He tells them his history. They ask him if he has brought none of his old belongings with him. He answers yes, but greatly against his will: his inward and cardinal cogitations, with which his countrymen, as well as himself, were so much delighted. Only in golden hours they seemed to leave him. Who cannot recognise the truth of this? Who has not groaned over the follies and idiotcies that cling to us like the doggerel verses that hang about our memories? The room in which he sleeps is called Peace. In the morning he is shown the curiosities, chiefly Scripture relics, in the palace. He is taken to the roof, from which he sees far off the outlines of the Delectable Mountains. Next, the ladies carry him to the armoury, and equip him for the dangers which lie next before him. He is to go down into the Valley of Humiliation, and pass thence through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Bunyan here shows the finest insight. To some pilgrims the Valley of Humiliation was the pleasantest part of the journey. Mr. Feeblemind, in the second part of the story, was happier there than anywhere. But Christian is Bunyan himself; and Bunyan had a stiff, self-willed nature, and had found his spirit the most stubborn part of him. Down here he encounters Apollyon himself, "straddling quite over the whole breadth of the way"—a

more effective devil than the Diabolus of *The Holy War*. He fights him for half a day, is sorely wounded in head, hand, and foot, and has a near escape of being pressed to death. Apollyon spreads his bat wings at last, and flies away; but there remains the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the dark scene of lonely horrors. Two men meet him on the borders of it. They tell him the valley is full of spectres; and they warn him, if he values his life, to go back. Well Bunyan knew these spectres, those dreary misgivings that he was toiling after an illusion; that "good" and "evil" had no meaning except on earth, and for man's convenience; and that he himself was but a creature of a day, allowed a brief season of what is called existence, and then to pass away and be as if he had never been. It speaks well for Bunyan's honesty that this state of mind, which religious people generally called wicked, is placed directly in his Pilgrim's path, and he is compelled to pass through it. In the valley, close at the road-side, there is a pit, which is one of the mouths of hell. A wicked spirit whispers to him as he goes by. He imagines that the thought had proceeded out of his own heart.

The sky clears when he is beyond the gorge. Outside it are the caves where the two giants, Pope and Pagan, had lived in old times. Pagan had been dead many a day. Pope was still living, "but he had grown so crazy and stiff in his joints that he could now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they went by, and biting his nails because he could not come at them."

Here he overtakes Faithful, a true pilgrim like himself. Faithful had met with trials; but his trials have not resembled Christian's. Christian's difficulties, like Bunyan's own, had been all spiritual. "The lusts of the flesh" seem to have had no attraction for him. Faithful had been assailed by Wanton, and had been obliged to fly from her. He had not fallen into the slough; but he had been beguiled by the Old Adam, who offered him one of his daughters for a wife. In the Valley of the Shadow of Death he had found sunshine all the way. Doubts about the truth of religion had never troubled the simpler nature of the good Faithful.

Mr. Talkative is the next character introduced, and is one of the best figures which Bunyan has drawn: Mr. Talkative, with Scripture at his finger's ends, and perfect master of all doctrinal subtleties, ready "to talk of things heavenly or things earthly, things moral or things evangelical, things sacred or things profane, things past or things to come, things foreign or things at home, things essential or things circumstantial, provided that all be done to our profit."

This gentleman would have taken in Faithful, who was awed by such a rush of volubility. Christian has seen him before, knows him well, and can describe him. "He is the son of one Saywell. He dwelt in Prating Row. He is for any company and for any talk. As he talks now with you, so will he talk when on the ale-bench. The more drink he hath in his crown, the more of these

things he hath in his mouth. Religion hath no place in his heart, or home, or conversation; all that he hath lieth in his tongue, and his religion is to make a noise therewith."

The elect, though they have ceased to be of the world, are still in the world. They are still part of the general community of mankind, and share, whether they like it or not, in the ordinary activities of life. . Faithful and Christian have left the City of Destruction. They have shaken off from themselves all liking for idle pleasures. They nevertheless find themselves in their journey at Vanity Fair, "a fair set up by Beelzebub 5000 years ago." Trade of all sorts went on at Vanity Fair, and people of all sorts were collected there: cheats, fools, asses, knaves, and rogues. Some were honest, many were dishonest; some lived peaceably and uprightly, others robbed, murdered, seduced their neighbours' wives, or lied and perjured themselves. Vanity Fair was European society as it existed in the days of Charles II. Each nation was represented. There was British Row, French Row, and Spanish Row. "The wares of Rome and her merchandise were greatly promoted at the fair, only the English nation, with some others, had taken a dislike to them." The pilgrims appear on the scene as the Apostles appeared at Antioch and Rome, to tell the people that there were things in the world of more consequence than money and pleasure. The better sort listen. Public opinion in general calls them fools and Bedlamites. The fair becomes excited, disturbances are feared, and the authorities send to make inquiries. Authorities naturally disapprove of novelties; and Christian and Faithful are arrested, beaten, and put in the cage. Their friends insist that they have done no harm, that they are innocent strangers teaching only what will make men better instead of worse. A riot follows. The authorities determine to make an example of them, and the result is the ever-memorable trial of the two pilgrims. They are brought in irons before my Lord Hategood, charged with "disturbing the trade of the town, creating divisions, and making converts to their opinions in contempt of the law of the Prince."

Faithful begins with an admission which would have made it difficult for Hategood to let him off, for he says that the Prince they talked of, being Beelzebub, the enemy of the Lord, he defied him and all his angels. Three witnesses were then called: Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank.

Envy says that Faithful regards neither prince nor people, but does all he can to possess men with disloyal notions, which he calls principles of faith and holiness.

Superstition says that he knows little of him, but has heard him say that "our religion is naught, and such by which no man can please God, from which saying his Lordship well knows will follow that we are yet in our sins, and finally shall be damned."

Pickthank deposes that he has heard Faithful rail on Beelzebub, and speak contemptuously of his honourable friends my Lord Old Man, my Lord Carnal Delight, my Lord Luxurious, my Lord Desire of Vain Glory, my Lord Lechery, Sir Having Greedy, and

the rest of the nobility, besides which he has railed against his lordship on the bench himself, calling him an ungodly villain.

The evidence was perfectly true, and the prisoner, when called on for his defence, confirmed it. He says (avoiding the terms in which he was said to rail and the like) that "the Prince of the town, with all the rabblement of his attendants by this gentleman named, are more fit for a being in hell than in this town or country."

Lord Hategood has been supposed to have been drawn from one or other of Charles II.'s judges, perhaps from either Twisden or Chester, who had the conversation with Bunyan's wife. But it is difficult to see how either one or the other could have acted otherwise than they did. Faithful might be quite right. Hell might be, and probably was, the proper place for Beelzebub, and for all persons holding authority under him. But as a matter of fact, a form of society did for some purpose or other exist, and had been permitted to exist for 5000 years, owning Beelzebub's sovereignty. It must defend itself, or must cease to be, and it could not be expected to make no effort at self-preservation. Faithful had come to Vanity Fair to make a revolution—a revolution extremely desirable, but one which it was unreasonable to expect the constituted authorities to allow to go forward. It was not a case of false witness. A prisoner who admits that he has taught the people that their Prince ought to be in hell, and has called the judge an ungodly villain, cannot complain if he is accused of preaching rebellion.

Lord Hategood charges the jury, and explains the law. "There was an Act made," he says, "in the days of Pharaoh the Great, servant to our Prince, that lest those of a contrary religion should multiply and grow too strong for him, their males should be thrown into the river. There was also an Act made in the days of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, that whoever would not fall down and worship his golden image should be thrown into a fiery furnace. There was also an Act made in the days of Darius that whoso for some time called upon any God but him should be cast into the lion's den. Now the substance of these laws this rebel hath broken, not only in thought (which is not to be borne), but also in word and deed, which must, therefore, be intolerable. For that of Pharaoh, his law was made upon a supposition to prevent mischief, no crime being yet apparent. For the second and third you see his disputations against our religion, and for the treason he hath confessed he deserveth to die the death."

"Then went the jury out, whose names were Mr. Blindman, Mr. Nogood, Mr. Malice, Mr. Lovelust, Mr. Liveloose, Mr. Heady, Mr. Highmind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Liar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hatelight, and Mr. Implacable, who every one gave in his private verdict against him among themselves, and afterwards unanimously concluded to bring him in guilty before the judge. And first, Mr. Blindman, the foreman, said: I see clearly that this man is a heretic. Then said Mr. Nogood, Away with such a fellow from

the earth. Aye, said Mr. Malice, I hate the very looks of him. Then said Mr. Lovelust, I could never endure him. Nor I, said Mr. Liveloose, for he would always be condemning my way. Hang him, hang him, said Mr. Heady. A sorry scrub, said Mr. Highmind. My heart riseth against him, said Mr. Enmity. He is a rogue, said Mr. Liar. Hanging is too good for him, said Mr. Cruelty. Let us despatch him out of the way, said Mr. Hatelight. Then, said Mr. Implacable, might I have all the world given me, I could not be reconciled to him; therefore, let us forthwith bring him in guilty of death."

Abstract qualities of character were never clothed in more substantial flesh and blood than these jurymen. Spenser's knights in the *Fairy Queen* are mere shadows to them. Faithful was, of course, condemned, scourged, buffeted, lanced in his feet with knives, stoned, stabbed, at last burned, and spared the pain of travelling further on the narrow road. A chariot and horses were waiting to bear him through the clouds, the nearest way to the Celestial Gate. Christian, who it seems had been remanded, contrives to escape. He is joined by Hopeful, a convert whom he has made in the town, and they pursue their journey in company. A second person is useful dramatically, and Hopeful takes Faithful's place. Leaving Vanity Fair, they are again on the Pilgrim's road. There they encounter Mr. Bye-ends. Bye-ends comes from the town of Plain-Speech, where he has a large kindred, My Lord Turnabout, my Lord Timeserver, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Two Tongues, the parson of the parish. Bye-ends himself was married to a daughter of Lady Feignings. Bunyan's invention in such things was inexhaustible.

They have more trials of the old kind with which Bunyan himself was so familiar. They cross the River of Life and even drink at it, yet for all this, and directly after, they stray into Bye-path Meadow. They lose themselves in the grounds of Doubting Castle, and are seized upon by Giant Despair—still a prey to doubt—still uncertain whether religion be not a dream, even after they have fought with wild beasts in Vanity Fair and have drunk of the water of life. Nowhere does Bunyan show better how well he knew the heart of man. Christian even thinks of killing himself in the dungeons of Doubting Castle. Hopeful cheers him up; they break their prison, recover the road again, and arrive at the Delectable Mountains in Emmanuel's own Land. There it might be thought the danger would be over, but it is not so. Even in Emmanuel's Land there is a door in the side of a hill which is a byeway to hell, and beyond Emmanuel's Land is the country of conceit, a new and special temptation for those who think that they are near salvation. Here they encounter "a brisk lad of the neighbourhood," needed soon after for a particular purpose, who is a good liver, prays devoutly, fasts regularly, pays tithes punctually, and hopes that every one will get to heaven by the religion which he professes, provided he fears God and tries to do his duty. The name of this brisk lad is Ignorance. Leaving him, they are caught in a net by

Flatterer, and are smartly whipped by "a shining one," who lets them out of it. False ideas and vanity lay them open once more to their most dangerous enemy. They meet a man coming toward them from the direction in which they are going. They tell him that they are on the way to Mount Zion. He laughs scornfully, and answers :—

"There is no such a place as you dream of in all the world. When I was at home in my own country, I heard as you now affirm, and from hearing I went out to see; and have been seeking this city this twenty years, but I find no more of it than I did the first day I went out. I am going back again, and will seek to refresh myself with things which I then cast away for hopes of that which I now see is not."

Still uncertainty—even on the verge of eternity—strange, doubtless, and reprehensible to Right Reverend persons, who never "cast away" anything; to whom a religious profession has been a highway to pleasure and perferment, who live in the comfortable assurance that as it has been in this life so it will be in the next. Only moral obliquity of the worst kind could admit a doubt about so excellent a religion as this. But Bunyan was not a Right Reverend. Christianity had brought him no palaces and large revenues, and a place among the great of the land. If Christianity was not true, his whole life was folly and illusion, and the dread that it might be so clung to his belief like its shadow.

The way was still long. The pilgrims reached the Enchanted Ground, and are drowsy and tired. Ignorance comes up with them again. He talks much about himself. He tells them of the good motives that come into his mind and comfort him as he walks. His heart tells him that he has left all for God and heaven. His belief and his life agree together, and he is humbly confident that his hopes are well-founded. When they speak to him of Salvation by Faith and Conviction by Sin, he cannot understand what they mean. As he leaves them they are reminded of one Temporary, "once a forward man in religion." Temporary dwelt in Graceless, "a town two miles from Honesty, next door to one Turnback." He "was going on pilgrimage, but became acquainted with one Save Self, and was never more heard of."

These figures all mean something. They correspond in part to Bunyan's own recollection of his own trials. Partly he is indulging his humour by describing others who were more astray than he was. It was over at last: the pilgrims arrive at the land of Beulah, the beautiful sunset after the storms were all past. Doubting Castle can be seen no more, and between them and their last rest there remains only the deep river over which there is no bridge, the river of Death. On the hill beyond the waters glitter the towers and domes of the Celestial City; but through the river they must first pass, and they find it deeper or shallower according to the strength of their faith. They go through, Hopeful feeling the bottom all along; Christian still in character, not without some horror, frightened by hobgoblins. On the other side they are re-

ceived by angels, and are carried to their final home, to live for ever in the Prince's presence. Then follows the only passage which the present writer reads with regret in this admirable book. It is given to the self-righteous Ignorance, who, doubtless, had been provoking with "his good motives that comforted him as he walked;" but Bunyan's zeal might have been satisfied by inflicting a lighter chastisement upon him. He comes up to the river: he crosses without the difficulties which attended Christian and Hopeful. "It happened that there was then at the place one Vain Hope, a Ferryman, that with his boat" (some viaticum or priestly absolution) "helped him over." He ascends the hill, and approaches the city, but no angels are in attendance, "neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement." Above the gate there was the verse written—"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gate into the city." Bunyan, who believed that no man could keep the commandments, and had no right to anything but damnation, must have introduced the words as if to mock the unhappy wretch who, after all, had tried to keep the commandments as well as most people, and was seeking admittance, with a conscience moderately at ease. "He was asked by the men that looked over the gate Whence come you, and what would you have?" He answered, "I have eaten and drunk in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our street." Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go in and show it to the king. So he fumbled in his bosom for one, and found none. Then said they, "Have you none?" But the man answered never a word. So they told the king; but he would not come down to see him, but commanded the two shining ones that conducted Christian and Hopeful to the city, to go out and take Ignorance and bind him hand and foot, and have him away. Then they took him up and carried him through the air to the door of the side of the hill, and put him in there. "Then," so Bunyan ends, "I saw that there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction; so I awoke, and behold it was a dream!"

Poor Ignorance! Hell—such a place as Bunyan imagined hell to be—was a hard fate for a miserable mortal who had failed to comprehend the true conditions of justification. We are not told that he was a vain boaster. He could not have advanced so near to the door of heaven if he had not been really a decent man, though vain and silly. Behold, it was a dream! The dreams which come to us when sleep is deep on the soul may be sent direct from some revealing power. When we are near waking, the supernatural insight may be refracted through human theory.

Charity will hope that the vision of Ignorance cast bound into the mouth of hell, when he was knocking at the gate of heaven, came through Homer's ivory gate, and that Bunyan here was a mistaken interpreter of the spiritual tradition. The fierce inferences of Puritan theology are no longer credible to us; yet nobler men than the Puritan are not to be found in all English history. It will

be well if the clearer sight which enables us to detect their errors enables us also to recognise their excellence.

The second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, like most second parts, is but a feeble reverberation of the first. It is comforting, no doubt, to know that Christian's wife and children were not left to their fate in the city of Destruction. But Bunyan had given us all that he had to tell about the journey, and we do not need a repetition of it. Of course there are touches of genius. No writing of Bunyan's could be wholly without it. But the rough simplicity is gone, and instead of it there is a tone of sentiment which is almost mawkish. Giants, dragons, and angelic champions carry us into a spurious fairy-land, where the knight-errant is a preacher in disguise. Fair ladies and love matches, however decorously chastened, suit ill with the sternness of the moral conflict between the soul and sin. Christiana and her children are tolerated for the pilgrim's sake to whom they belong. Had they appealed to our interest on their own merits, we would have been contented to wish them well through their difficulties and to trouble ourselves no further about them.

CHAPTER X.

LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

LITTLE remains to be told of Bunyan's concluding years. No friends preserved his letters. No diaries of his own survive to gratify curiosity. Men truly eminent think too meanly of themselves or their work to care much to be personally remembered. He lived for sixteen years after his release from the gaol, and those years were spent in the peaceful discharge of his congregational duties, in writing, in visiting the scattered members of the Baptist communion, or in preaching in the villages and woods. His outward circumstances were easy. He had a small but well-provided house in Bedford, into which he collected rare and valuable pieces of old furniture and plate, and other articles—presents, probably, from those who admired him. He visited London annually to preach in the Baptist churches. *The Pilgrim's Progress* spread his fame over England, over Europe, and over the American settlements. It was translated into many languages; and so catholic was its spirit, that it was adopted with a few alterations for the use even of the Catholics themselves. He abstained, as he had done steadily throughout his life, from all interference with politics, and the Government in turn never again meddled with him. He even received offers of promotion to larger spheres of action, which might have tempted a meaner nature. But he could never be induced to leave Bedford, and there he quietly stayed through changes of ministry, Popish plots, and Monmouth rebellions, while the terror of a restoration of Popery was bringing on the Revolution—careless of kings and cabinets, and confident that Giant Pope had lost his power for harm, and thenceforward could only bite his nails at the passing pilgrims. Once only, after the failure of the Exclusion Bill, he seems to have feared that violent measures might again be tried against him. It is even said that he was threatened with arrest, and it was on this occasion that he made over his property to his wife. The policy of James II., however, transparently treacherous though it was, for the time gave security to the Nonconformist congregations; and in the years which immediately preceded the final expulsion of the Stuarts, liberty of conscience was under fewer restrictions than it had been in the most rigorous days of the Reformation, or under the Long Parlia-

ment itself. Thus the anxiety passed away, and Bunyan was left undisturbed to finish his earthly work.

He was happy in his family. His blind child, for whom he had been so touchingly anxious, had died while he was in prison. His other children lived and did well; and his brave companion, who had spoken so stoutly for him to the judges, continued at his side. His health, it was said, had suffered from his confinement; but the only serious illness which we hear of was an attack of "sweating sickness," which came upon him in 1687, and from which he never thoroughly recovered. He was then fifty-nine, and in the next year he died.

His end was characteristic. It was brought on by exposure when he was engaged in an act of charity. A quarrel had broken out in a family at Reading with which Bunyan had some acquaintance. A father had taken offence at his son, and threatened to disinherit him. Bunyan undertook a journey on horseback from Bedford to Reading in the hope of reconciling them. He succeeded, but at the cost of his life. Returning by London he was overtaken on the road by a storm of rain, and was wetted through before he could find shelter. The chill, falling on a constitution already weakened by illness, brought on fever. He was able to reach the house of Mr. Strudwick, one of his London friends; but he never left his bed afterwards. In ten days he was dead. The exact date is uncertain. It was towards the end of August, 1688, between two and three months before the landing of King William. He was buried in Mr. Strudwick's vault, in the Dissenters' burying-ground at Bunhill Fields. His last words were, "Take me, for I come to Thee."

So ended, at the age of sixty, a man who, if his importance may be measured by the influence which he has exerted over succeeding generations, must be counted among the most extraordinary persons whom England has produced. It has been the fashion to dwell on the disadvantages of his education, and to regret the carelessness of nature which brought into existence a man of genius in a tinker's hut at Elstow. Nature is less partial than she appears, and all situations in life have their compensations along with them.

Circumstances, I should say, qualified Bunyan perfectly well for the work which he had to do. If he had gone to school, as he said, with Aristotle and Plato; if he had been broken in at a university and been turned into a bishop; if he had been in any one of the learned professions, he might easily have lost, or might have never known, the secret of his powers. He was born to be the Poet-apostle of the English middle classes, imperfectly educated like himself; and, being one of themselves, he had the key of their thoughts and feelings in his own heart. Like nine out of ten of his countrymen, he came into the world with no fortune but his industry. He had to work with his hands for his bread, and to advance by the side of his neighbours along the road of common business. His knowledge was scanty, though of rare quality. He knew his Bible probably by heart. He had studied history in

Foxe's *Martyrs*, but nowhere else that we can trace. The rest of his mental furniture was gathered at first hand from his conscience, his life, and his occupations. Thus, every idea which he received falling into a soil naturally fertile, sprouted up fresh, vigorous, and original. He confessed to have felt (as a man of his powers could hardly have failed to feel) continued doubts about the Bible and the reality of the Divine government. It has been well said that when we look into the world to find the image of God, it is as if we were to stand before a looking-glass, expecting to see ourselves reflected there, and to see nothing. Education scarcely improves our perception in this respect; and wider information, wider acquaintance with the thoughts of other men in other ages and countries, might as easily have increased his difficulties as have assisted him in overcoming them. He was not a man who could have contented himself with compromises and half-convictions. No force could have subdued him into a decent Anglican divine—a "Mr. Two Tongues, parson of the parish." He was passionate and thorough-going. The authority of conscience presented itself to him only in the shape of religious obligation. Religion once shaken into a "perhaps," would have had no existence to him; and it is easy to conceive a university-bred Bunyan, an intellectual meteor, flaring uselessly across the sky and disappearing in smoke and nothingness.

Powerful temperaments are necessarily intense. Bunyan, born a tinker, had heard right and wrong preached to him in the name of the Christian creed. He concluded after a struggle that Christianity was true, and on that conviction he built himself up into what he was. It might have been the same, perhaps, with Burns had he been born a century before. Given Christianity as an unquestionably true account of the situation and future prospects of man, the feature of it most appalling to the imagination is that hell-fire—a torment exceeding the most horrible which fancy can conceive, and extending into eternity—awaits the enormous majority of the human race. The dreadful probability seized hold on the young Bunyan's mind. He shuddered at it when awake. In the visions of the night it came before him in the tremendous details of the dreadful reality. It became the governing thought in his nature.

Such a belief, if it does not drive a man to madness, will at least cure him of trifling. It will clear his mind of false sentiment, take the nonsense out of him, and enable him to resist vulgar temptation as nothing else will. The danger is that the mind may not bear the strain, that the belief itself may crack and leave nothing. Bunyan was hardly tried, but in him the belief did not crack. It spread over his character. It filled him first with terror; then with a loathing of sin, which entailed so awful a penalty; then, as his personal fears were allayed by the recognition of Christ, it turned to tenderness and pity.

There was no fanaticism in Bunyan; nothing harsh or savage. His natural humour perhaps saved him. His few recorded sayings

all refer to the one central question; but healthy seriousness often best expresses itself in playful quaintness. He was once going somewhere disguised as a waggoner. He was overtaken by a constable who had a warrant to arrest him. The constable asked him if he knew that devil of a fellow Bunyan. "Know him!" Bunyan said. "You might call him a devil if you knew him as well as I once did."

A Cambridge student was trying to show him what a divine thing reason was—"reason, the chief glory of man, which distinguished him from a beast," &c., &c.

Bunyan growled out: "Sin distinguishes man from beast. Is sin divine?"

He was extremely tolerant in his terms of Church membership. He offended the stricter part of his congregation by refusing even to make infant baptism a condition of exclusion. The only persons with whom he declined to communicate were those whose lives were openly immoral. His chief objection to the Church of England was the admission of the ungodly to the Sacraments. He hated party titles and quarrels upon trifles. He desired himself to be called a Christian or a Believer, or "any name which was approved by the Holy Ghost." Divisions, he said, were to Churches like wars to countries. Those who talked most about religion cared least for it; and controversies about doubtful things, and things of little moment, ate up all zeal for things which were practicable and indisputable.

"In countenance," wrote a friend, "he appeared to be of a stern and rough temper, but in his conversation mild and affable; not given to loquacity or to much discourse in company unless some urgent occasion required it; observing never to boast of himself or his parts, but rather to seem low in his own eyes, and submit himself to the judgment of others; abhorring lying and swearing; being just, in all that lay in his power, to his word; not seeming to revenge injuries; loving to reconcile differences and make friendships with all. He had a sharp, quick eye, with an excellent discerning of persons, being of good judgment and quick wit." "He was tall of stature, strong-boned, though not corpulent, somewhat of a ruddy face, with sparkling eyes, wearing his hair on his upper lip; his hair reddish, but in his later days time had sprinkled it with grey; his nose well set, but not declining or bending; his mouth moderate large, his forehead something high, and his habit always plain and modest."

He was himself indifferent to advancement, and he did not seek it for his family. A London merchant offered to take his son into his house. "God," he said, "did not send me to advance my family, but to preach the Gospel." He had no vanity—an exemption extremely rare in those who are personally much before the public. The personal popularity was in fact the part of his situation which he least liked. When he was to preach in London, "if there was but one day's notice the meeting-house was crowded to overflowing." Twelve hundred people would be found collected

before seven o'clock on a dark winter's morning to hear a lecture from him. In Zoar Street, Southwark, his church was sometimes so crowded that he had to be lifted to the pulpit stairs over the congregation's heads. It pleased him, but he was on the watch against the pleasure of being himself admired. A friend complimented him once, after service, on "the sweet sermon" which he had delivered. "You need not remind me of that," he said. "The devil told me of it before I was out of the pulpit."

"Conviction of sin" has become a conventional phrase, shallow and ineffective even in those who use it most sincerely. Yet moral evil is still the cause of nine-tenths of the misery in the world, and it is not easy to measure the value of a man who could prolong the conscious sense of the deadly nature of it, even under the forms of a decomposing theology. Times are changing. The intellectual current is bearing us we know not where, and the course of the stream is in a direction which leads us far from the conclusions in which Bunyan and the Puritans established themselves; but the truths which are most essential for us to know cannot be discerned by speculative arguments. Chemistry cannot tell us why some food is wholesome and other food is poisonous. That food is best for us which best nourishes the body into health and strength; and a belief in a Supernatural Power which has given us a law to live by, and to which we are responsible for our conduct, has alone, of all the influences known to us, succeeded in ennobling and elevating the character of man. The particular theories which men have formed about it have often been wild and extravagant. Imagination, agitated by fear or stimulated by pious enthusiasm, has peopled heaven with demigods and saints—creations of fancy, human forms projected upon a mist and magnified into celestial images. How much is true of all that men have believed in past times and have now ceased to believe, how much has been a too eager dream, no one now can tell. It may be that other foundations may be laid hereafter for human conduct on which an edifice can be raised no less fair and beautiful; but no signs of it are as yet apparent.

So far as we yet know, morality rests upon a sense of obligation; and obligation has no meaning except as implying a Divine command, without which it would cease to be. Until "duty" can be presented to us in a shape which will compel our recognition of it with equal or superior force, the passing away of "the conviction of sin" can operate only to obscure our aspirations after a high ideal of life and character. The scientific theory may be correct, and it is possible that we may be standing on the verge of the most momentous intellectual revolution which has been experienced in the history of our race. It may be so, and also it may not be so. It may be that the most important factors in the scientific equation are beyond the reach of human intellect. However it be, the meat which gives strength to the man is poison to the child; and as yet we are still children, and are likely to remain children. "Every relief from outward restraint," says one who was not given to superstition, "if it be not attended with increased power of self-com-

mand, is simply fatal." Men of intelligence, therefore, to whom life is not a theory but a stern fact, conditioned round with endless possibilities of wrong and suffering, though they may never again adopt the letter of Bunyan's creed, will continue to see in conscience an authority for which culture is no substitute; they will conclude that in one form or other responsibility is not a fiction but a truth; and, so long as this conviction lasts, *The Pilgrim's Progress* will still be dear to all men of all creeds who share in it even though it pleases the "elect" modern philosophers to describe its author as a "Philistine of genius."

THE END.

HUME

BY

PROFESSOR HUXLEY

CONTENTS.

PART I.—HUME'S LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

EARLY LIFE: LITERARY AND POLITICAL WRITINGS 7

CHAPTER II.

LATER YEARS: THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND. 21

PART II.—HUME'S PHILOSOPHY.

CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECT AND SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY 33

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTENTS OF THE MIND 41

CHAPTER III.

ORIGIN OF THE IMPRESSIONS 49

CHAPTER IV.

THE CLASSIFICATION AND THE NOMENCLATURE OF MENTAL OPERATIONS 58

PAGE.

CHAPTER V.

MENTAL PHENOMENA OF ANIMALS 66

CHAPTER VI.

LANGUAGE: PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING NECESSARY TRUTHS . . . 73

CHAPTER VII.

ORDER OF NATURE: MIRACLES 82

CHAPTER VIII.

THEISM: EVOLUTION OF THEOLOGY 89

CHAPTER IX.

THE SOUL: THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY 103

CHAPTER X.

VOLITION: LIBERTY AND NECESSITY 114

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS 122

HUME.

PART I.

HUME'S LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE: LITERARY AND POLITICAL WRITINGS.

DAVID HUME was born in Edinburgh on the 26th of April (O.S.), 1711. His parents were then residing in the parish of the Tron Church, apparently on a visit to the Scottish capital, as the small estate which his father, Joseph Hume, or Home, inherited, lay in Berwickshire, on the banks of the Whitadder, or Whitewater, a few miles from the border, and within sight of English ground. The paternal mansion was little more than a very modest farm-house,* and the property derived its name of Ninewells from a considerable spring, which breaks out on the slope in front of the house, and falls into the Whitadder.

Both mother and father came of good Scottish families—the paternal line running back to Lord Home of Douglas, who went over to France with the Douglas during the French wars of Henry V. and VI., and was killed at the battle of Verneuil. Joseph Hume died when David was an infant, leaving himself and two elder children, a brother and a sister, to the care of their mother, who is described by David Hume in *My Own Life* as "a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and education of her children." Mr. Burton says: "Her portrait, which I have seen, represents a thin but pleasing countenance, expressive of great intellectual acuteness;" and as Hume told Dr. Black that she had "precisely the same constitu-

* A picture of the house, taken from Drummond's *History of Noble British Families*, is to be seen in Chamber's *Book of Days* (April 26th); and if, as Drummond says, "It is a favorable specimen of the best Scotch lairds' houses," all that can be said is that the worst Scotch lairds must have been poorly lodged indeed.

tion with himself" and died of the disorder which proved fatal to him. it is probable that the qualities inherited from his mother had much to do with the future philosopher's eminence. It is curious, however, that her estimate of her son in her only recorded, and perhaps slightly apocryphal utterance, is of a somewhat unexpected character. "Our Davie's a fine, good-natured crater, but uncommon wake-minded." The first part of the judgment was indeed verified by "Davie's" whole life; but one might seek in vain for signs of what is commonly understood as "weakness of mind" in a man who not only showed himself to be an intellectual athlete, but who had an eminent share of practical wisdom and tenacity of purpose. One would like to know, however, when it was that Mrs. Hume committed herself to this not too flattering judgment of her younger son. For as Hume reached the mature age of four-and-thirty before he obtained any employment of sufficient importance to convert the meagre pittance of a middling laird's younger brother into a decent maintenance, it is not improbable that a shrewd Scot's wife may have thought his devotion to philosophy and poverty to be due to mere infirmity of purpose. But she lived till 1749, long enough to see more than the dawn of her son's literary fame and official importance, and probably changed her mind about "Davie's" force of character.

David Hume appears to have owed little to schools or universities. There is some evidence that he entered the Greek class in the University of Edinburgh in 1723—when he was a boy of twelve years of age—but it is not known how long his studies were continued, and he did not graduate. In 1727, at any rate, he was living at Ninewells, and already possessed by that love of learning and thirst for literary fame, which, as *My Own Life* tells us, was the ruling passion of his life and the chief source of his enjoyments. A letter of this date, addressed to his friend Michael Ramsay, is certainly a most singular production for a boy of sixteen. After sundry quotations from Virgil, the letter proceeds:—

"The perfectly wise man that outbraves fortune, is much greater than the husbandman who slips by her; and, indeed, this pastoral and saturnian happiness I have in a great measure come at just now. I live like a king, pretty much by myself, neither full of action nor perturbation—*molles somnos.* This state, however, I can foresee, is not to be relied on. My peace of mind is not sufficiently confirmed by philosophy to withstand the blows of fortune. This greatness and elevation of soul is to be found only in study and contemplation. This alone can teach us to look down on human accidents. You must allow [me] to talk thus like a philosopher: 'tis a subject I think much on, and could talk all day long of."

If David talked in this strain to his mother, her tongue probably gave utterance to "Bless the bairn!" and, in her private soul, the epithet "wake-minded" may then have recorded itself. But, though few lonely, thoughtful, studious boys of sixteen give vent to their thoughts in such stately periods, it is probable that the brooding over an ideal is commoner at this age than fathers and mothers, busy with the cares of practical life, are apt to imagine.

About a year later, Hume's family tried to launch him into the profession of the law; but, as he tells us, "while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring," and the attempt seems to have come to an abrupt termination. Nevertheless, as a very competent authority * wisely remarks :—

"There appear to have been in Hume all the elements of which a good lawyer is made: clearness of judgment, power of rapidly acquiring knowledge, untiring industry, and dialectic skill: and if his mind had not been preoccupied, he might have fallen into the gulf in which many of the world's greatest geniuses lie buried—professional eminence; and might have left behind him a reputation limited to the traditional recollections of the Parliament-house, or associated with important decisions. He was through life an able, clear-headed man of business, and I have seen several legal documents, written in his own hand and evidently drawn by himself. They stand the test of general professional observation; and their writer, by preparing documents of facts of such a character on his own responsibility, showed that he had considerable confidence in his ability to adhere to the forms adequate for the occasion. He talked of it as 'an ancient prejudice industriously propagated by the dunces in all countries, that *a man of genius is unfit for business*,' and he showed, in his general conduct through life, that he did not choose to come voluntarily under this proscription."

Six years longer Hume remained at Ninewells before he made another attempt to embark in a practical career—this time commerce—and with a like result. For a few months' trial proved that kind of life, also, to be hopelessly against the grain.

It was while in London, on his way to Bristol, where he proposed to commence his mercantile life, that Hume addressed to some eminent London physician (probably, as Mr. Burton suggests, Dr. George Cheyne) a remarkable letter. Whether it was ever sent seems doubtful; but it shows that philosophers as well as poets have their Werterian crises, and it presents an interesting parallel to John Stuart Mill's record of the corresponding period of his youth. The letter is too long to be given in full, but a few quotations may suffice to indicate its importance to those who desire to comprehend the man.

"You must know then that from my earliest infancy I found always a strong inclination to books and letters. As our college education in Scotland, extending little further than the languages, ends commonly when we are about fourteen or fifteen years of age, I was after that left to my own choice in my reading, and found it incline me almost equally to books of reasoning and philosophy, and to poetry and the polite authors. Every one who is acquainted either with the philosophers or critics, knows that there is nothing yet established in either of these two sciences, and that they contain little more than endless disputes, even in the most fundamental articles. Upon examination of these, I found a certain boldness of temper growing on me, which was not inclined to submit to any authority in these subjects, but led me to seek out some new medium, by which

* Mr. John Hill Burton, in his valuable *Life of Hume*, on which, I need hardly say, I have drawn freely for the materials of the present biographical sketch.

truth might be established. After much study and reflection on this, at last, when I was about eighteen years of age, there seemed to be opened up to me a new scene of thought, which transported me beyond measure, and made me, with an ardour natural to young men, throw up every other pleasure or business to apply entirely to it. The law, which was the business I designed to follow, appeared nauseous to me, and I could think of no other way of pushing my fortune in the world but that of a scholar and philosopher. I was infinitely happy in this course of life for some months; till at last, about the beginning of September, 1729, all my ardour seemed in a moment to be extinguished, and I could no longer raise my mind to that pitch which formerly gave me such excessive pleasure."

This "decline of soul" Hume attributes, in part, to his being smitten with the beautiful representations of virtue in the works of Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch, and being thereby led to discipline his temper and his will along with his reason and understanding.

"I was continually fortifying myself with reflections against death, and poverty, and shame, and pain, and all the other calamities of life."

And he adds, very characteristically:—

"These, no doubt, are exceeding useful when joined with an active life, because the occasion being presented along with the reflection, works it into the soul, and makes it take a deep impression; but, in solitude, they serve to little other purpose than to waste the spirits, the force of the mind meeting no resistance, but wasting itself in the air, like our arm when it misses its aim."

Along with all this mental perturbation, symptoms of scurvy, a disease now almost unknown among landsmen, but which, in the days of winter, salt meat, before root crops flourished in the Lothians, greatly plagued our forefathers, made their appearance. And, indeed, it may be suspected that physical conditions were, at first, at the bottom of the whole business; for, in 1731, a ravenous appetite set in, and in six weeks, from being tall, lean, and raw-boned, Hume says he became sturdy and robust, with a ruddy complexion and a cheerful countenance—eating, sleeping, and feeling well, except that the capacity for intense mental application seemed to be gone. He, therefore, determined to seek out a more active life; and, though he could not and would not "quit his pretensions to learning but with his last breath," he resolved "to lay them aside for some time, in order the more effectually to resume them."

The careers open to a poor Scottish gentleman in those days were very few; and, as Hume's option lay between a travelling tutorship and a stool in a merchant's office, he chose the latter.

"And having got recommendation to a considerable trader in Bristol, I am just now hastening thither, with a resolution to forget myself, and everything that is past, to engage myself, as far as is possible, in that course of life, and to toss about the world from one pole to the other, till I leave this distemper behind me." *

* One cannot but be reminded of young Descartes' renunciation of study for soldiering.

But it was all of no use—Nature would have her way—and in the middle of 1736, David Hume, aged twenty-three, without a profession or any assured means of earning a guinea; and having doubtless, by his apparent vacillation, but real tenacity of purpose, once more earned the title of "wake-minded" at home; betook himself to a foreign country.

"I went over to France, with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat: and there I laid that plan of life which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible except the improvement of my talents in literature." *

Hume passed through Paris on his way to Rheims, where he resided for some time; though the greater part of his three years' stay was spent at La Flêche, in frequent intercourse with the Jesuits of the famous college in which Descartes was educated. Here he composed his first work, the *Treatise of Human Nature;* though it would appear, from the following passage in the letter to Cheyne, that he had been accumulating materials to that end for some years before he left Scotland.

"I found that the moral philosophy transmitted to us by antiquity laboured under the same inconvenience that has been found in their natural philosophy, of being entirely hypothetical, and depending more upon invention than experience: every one consulted his fancy in erecting schemes of virtue and happiness, without regarding human nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend."

This is the key-note of the *Treatise;* of which Hume himself says apologetically, in one of his letters, that it was planned before he was twenty-one and composed before he had reached the age of twenty-five.†

Under these circumstances, it is probably the most remarkable philosophical work, both intrinsically and in its effects upon the course of thought, that has ever been written. Berkeley, indeed, published the *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*, the *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, and the *Three Dialogues*, between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-eight; and thus comes very near to Hume, both in precocity and in influence; but his investigations are more limited in their scope than those of his Scottish contemporary.

The first and second volumes of the *Treatise*, containing Book I., "Of the Understanding," and Book II., "Of the Passions," were published in January, 1739.‡ The publisher gave fifty pounds

* *My Own Life.*

† Letter to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, 1751. "So vast an undertaking, planned before I was one-and-twenty, and composed before twenty-five, must necessarily be very defective. I have repented my haste a hundred and a hundred times."

‡ So says Mr. Burton, and that he is right is proved by a letter of Hume's, dated February 13, 1739, in which he writes, "'Tis now a fortnight since my book was published." But it is a curious illustration of the value of testimony, that Hume, in *My Own Life*, states: "In the end of 1738 I published my Treatise, and immediately went down to my mother and my brother."

for the copyright; which is probably more than an unknown writer of twenty-seven years of age would get for a similar work at the present time. But, in other respects, its success fell far short of Hume's expectations. In a letter dated the 1st of June, 1739, he writes:—

"I am not much in the humour of such compositions at present, having received news from London of the success of my *Philosophy*, which is but indifferent, if I may judge by the sale of the book, and if I may believe my bookseller."

This, however, indicates a very different reception from that which Hume, looking through the inverted telescope of old age, ascribes to the *Treatise* in *My Own Life*.

"Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my *Tratise of Human Nature*. It fell *deadborn from the press* without reaching such a distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots."

As a matter of fact, it was fully, and, on the whole, respectfully and appreciatively, reviewed in the *History of the Works of the Learned* for November, 1739.* Whoever the reviewer may have been, he was a man of discernment, for he says that the work bears "incontestable marks of a great capacity, of a soaring genius, but young, and not yet thoroughly practised;" and he adds, that we shall probably have reason to consider "this, compared with the later productions, in the same light as we view the juvenile works of a Milton, or the first manner of a Raphael or other celebrated painter." In a letter to Hutcheson, Hume merely speaks of this article as "somewhat abusive;" so that his vanity, being young and callow, seems to have been correspondingly wide-mouthed and hard to satiate.

It must be confessed that, on this occasion, no less than on that of his other publications, Hume exhibits no small share of the craving after mere notoriety and vulgar success, as distinct from the pardonable, if not honourable, ambition for solid and enduring fame, which would have harmonised better with his philosophy. Indeed, it appears to be by no means improbable that this peculiarity of Hume's moral constitution was the cause of his gradually forsaking philosophical studies, after the publication of the third part (*On Morals*) of the *Treatise*, in 1740, and turning to those political and historical topics which were likely to yield, and did in fact yield, a much better return of that sort of success which his soul loved. The *Philosophical Essays Concerning the Human Understanding*, which afterwards became the *Inquiry*, is not much more than an abridgment and recast, for popular use, of parts of the *Treatise*, with the addition of the essays on Miracles and on Necessity. In style, it exhibits a great improvement on the *Treatise;* but the substance, if not deteriorated, is certainly not improved. Hume

* Burton, *Life*, vol. i. p 109.

does not really bring his mature powers to bear upon his early speculations, in the later work. The crude fruits have not been ripened, but they have been ruthlessly pruned away, along with the branches which bore them. The result is a pretty shrub enough; but not the tree of knowledge, with its roots firmly fixed in fact, its branches perennially budding forth into new truths, which Hume might have reared. Perhaps, after all, worthy Mrs. Hume was, in the highest sense, right. Davie was "wake-minded," not to see that the world of philosophy was his to overrun and subdue, if he would but persevere in the work he had begun. But no—he must needs turn aside for "success": and verily he had his reward; but not the crown he might have won.

In 1740, Hume seems to have made an acquaintance which rapidly ripened into a life-long friendship. Adam Smith was at that time a boy student of seventeen at the University of Glasgow; and Hume sends a copy of the *Treatise* to "Mr. Smith," apparently on the recommendation of the well-known Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the university. It is a remarkable evidence of Adam Smith's early intellectual development that a youth of his age should be thought worthy of such a present.

In 1741 Hume published anonymously, at Edinburgh, the first volume of *Essays Moral and Political*, which was followed in 1742 by the second volume.

These pieces are written in an admirable style, and, though arranged without apparent method, a system of political philosophy may be gathered from their contents. Thus the third essay, *That Politics may be reduced to a Science*, defends that thesis, and dwells on the importance of forms of government.

"So great is the force of laws and of particular forms of government, and so little dependence have they on the humours and tempers of men, that consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them as any which the mathematical sciences afford us."—(III. 15.) (*See* p. 32.)

Hume proceeds to exemplify the evils which inevitably flow from universal suffrage, from aristocratic privilege, and from elective monarchy, by historical examples, and concludes:—

"That an hereditary prince, a nobility without vassals, and a people voting by their representatives, form the best monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy."—(III. 18.)

If we reflect that the following passage of the same essay was written nearly a century and a half ago, it would seem that whatever other changes may have taken place, political warfare remains *in statu quo*:—

"Those who either attack or defend a minister in such a government as ours, where the utmost liberty is allowed, always carry matters to an extreme, and exaggerate his merit or demerit with regard to the public

His enemies are sure to charge him with the greatest enormities, both in domestic and foreign management; and there is no meanness or crime of which, in their judgment, he is not capable. Unnecessary wars, scandalous treaties, profusion of public treasure, oppressive taxes, every kind of maladministration is ascribed to him. To aggravate the charge, his pernicious conduct, it is said, will extend its baneful influence even to posterity, by undermining the best constitution in the world, and disordering that wise system of laws, institutions, and customs, by which our ancestors, during so many centuries, have been so happily governed. He is not only a wicked minister in himself, but has removed every security provided against wicked ministers for the future.

"On the other hand, the partisans of the minister make his panegyric rise as high as the accusation against him, and celebrate his wise, steady, and moderate conduct in every part of his administration. The honour and interest of the nation supported abroad, public credit maintained at home, persecution restrained, faction subdued: the merit of all these blessings is ascribed solely to the minister. At the same time, he crowns all his other merits by a religious care of the best government in the world, which he has preserved in all its parts, and has transmitted entire, to be the happiness and security of the latest posterity."—(III. 26.)

Hume sagely remarks that the panegyric and the accusation cannot both be true; and, that what truth there may be in either, rather tends to show that our much vaunted constitution does not fulfil its chief object, which is to provide a remedy against maladministration. And if it does not—

"we are rather beholden to any minister who undermines it and affords us the opportunity of erecting a better in its place."—(III. 28.)

The fifth Essay discusses the *Origin of Government:*—

"Man, born in a family, is compelled to maintain society from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit. The same creature, in his farther progress, is engaged to establish political society, in order to administer justice, without which there can be no peace among them, nor safety, nor mutual intercourse. We are therefore to look upon all the vast apparatus of our government as having ultimately no other object or purpose but the distribution of justice, or, in other words, the support of the twelve judges. Kings and parliaments, fleets and armies, officers of the court and revenue, ambassadors, ministers and privy councillors, are all subordinate in the end to this part of administration. Even the clergy, as their duty leads them to calculcate morality, may justly be thought, so far as regards this world, to have no other useful object of their institution."—(III. 37.)

The police theory of government has never been stated more tersely: and, if there were only one state in the world; and if we could be certain by intuition, or by the aid of revelation, that it is wrong for society, as a corporate body, to do anything for the improvement of its members, and thereby indirectly support the twelve judges, no objection could be raised to it.

Unfortunately the existence of rival or inimical nations furnishes "kings and parliaments, fleets and armies," with a good deal of

occupation beyond the support of thet welve judges; and, though the proposition that the State has no business to meddle with any thing but the administration of justice, seems sometimes to be regarded as an axiom, it can hardly be said to be intuitively certain, inasmuch as a great many people absolutely repudiate it; while, as yet, the attempt to give it the authority of a revelation has not been made.

As Hume says with profound truth in the fourth essay, *On the Principles of Government*:—

"As force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is, therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and the most military governments, as well as to the most free and the most popular."—(III. 31.)

But if the whole fabric of social organisation rests on opinion it, may surely be fairly argued that, in the interests of self-preservation, if for no better reason, society has a right to see that the means of forming just opinions are placed within reach of every one of its members; and therefore, that due provision for education, at any rate, is a right and, indeed, a duty, of the state.

The three opinions upon which all government, or the authority of the few over the many, is founded, says Hume, are public interest, right to power, and right to property. No government can permanently exist unless the majority of the citizens, who are the ultimate depositary of Force, are convinced that it serves the general interest, that it has lawful authority, and that it respects individual rights:—

"A government may endure for several ages, though the balance of power and the balance of property do not coincide. . . . But where the original constitution allows any share of power, though small, to an order of men who possess a large share of property, it is easy for them gradually to stretch their authority, and bring the balance of power to coincide with that of property. This has been the case with the House of Commons in England."—(III. 34.)

Hume then points out that, in his time, the authority of the Commons was by no means equivalent to the property and power it represented, and proceeds:—

"Were the members obliged to receive instructions from their constituents, like the Dutch deputies, this would entirely alter the case; and if such immense power and riches as those of all the Commons of Great Britain were brought into the scale, it is not easy to conceive that the crown could either influence that multitude of people, or withstand that balance of property. It is true, the crown has great influence over the collective body in the elections of members; but were this influence, which at present is only exerted once in seven years, to be employed in bringing over the people to every vote, it would soon be wasted, and no skill, pop-

ularity, or revenue could support it. I must, therefore, be of opinion that an alteration in this particular would introduce a total alteration in our government, would soon reduce it to a pure republic · and, perhaps, to republic of no inconvenient form."—(III. 35.)

Viewed by the light of subsequent events, this is surely a very remarkable example of political sagacity. The members of the House of Commons are not yet delegates ; but, with the widening of the suffrage and the rapidly increasing tendency to drill and organise the electorate, and to exact definite pledges from candidates,they are rapidly becoming, if not delegates, at least attorneys for committees of electors. The same causes are constantly tending to exclude men, who combine a keen sense of self-respect with large intellectual capacity, from a position in which the one is as constantly offended as the other is neutralised. Notwithstanding the attempt of George the Third to resuscitate the royal authority, Hume's foresight has been so completely justified that no one now dreams of the crown exerting the slightest influence upon elections.

In the seventh essay, Hume raises a very interesting discussion as to the probable ultimate result of the forces which were at work in the British Constitution in the first part of the eighteenth century :—

"There has been a sudden and sensible change in the opinions of men, within these last fifty years, by the progress of learning and of liberty. Most people in this island have divested themselves of all superstitious reverence to names and authority ; the clergy have much lost their credit ; their pretensions and doctrines have been much ridiculed ; and even religion can scarce support itself in the world. The mere name of *king* commands little respect ; and to talk of a king as God's vicegerent on earth, or to give him any of those magnificent titles which formerly dazzled mankind, would but excite laughter in every one."—(III. 54.)

In fact, at the present day, the danger to monarchy in Britain would appear to lie, not in increasing love for equality, for which, except as regards the law, Englishmen have never cared, but rather entertain an aversion ; nor in any abstract democratic theories, upon which the mass of Englishmen pour the contempt with which they view theories in general ; but in the constantly increasing tendency of monarchy to become slightly absurd, from the ever-widening discrepancy between modern political ideas and the theory of kingship. As Hume observes, even in his time, people had left off making believe that a king was a different species of man from other men ; and, since his day, more and more such make-believes have become impossible ; until the maintenance of kingship in coming generations seems likely to depend entirely upon whether it is the general opinion that a hereditary president of our virtual republic will serve the general interest better than an elective one or not. The tendency of public feeling in this direction is patient, but it does not follow that a republic is to be the final stage of our government. In fact, Hume thinks not :—

"It is well known that every government must come to a period, and that death is unavoidable to the political, as well as to the animal body. But, as one kind of death may be preferable to another, it may be inquired, whether it be more desirable for the British constitution to terminate in a popular government, or in an absolute monarchy? Here, I would frankly declare, that though liberty be preferable to slavery, in almost every case; yet I should rather wish to see an absolute monarch than a republic in this island. For let us consider what kind of republic we have reason to expect. The question is not concerning any fine imaginary republic of which a man forms a plan in his closet. There is no doubt but a popular government may be imagined more perfect than an absolute monarchy, or even than our present constitution. But what reason have we to expect that any such government will ever be established in Great Britain, upon the dissolution of our monarchy? If any single person acquire power enough to take our constitution to pieces, and put it up anew, he is really an absolute monarch; and we have already had an instance of this kind, sufficient to convince us that such a person will never resign his power, or establish any free government. Matters, therefore, must be trusted to their natural progress and operation; and the House of Commons, according to its present constitution, must be the only legislature in such a popular government. The inconveniences attending such a situation of affairs, present themselves by thousands. If the House of Commons, in such a case, ever dissolve itself, which is not to be expected, we may look for a civil war every election. If it continues itself, we shall suffer all the tyranny of a faction subdivided into new factions. And as such a violent government cannot long subsist, we shall at last, after many convulsions and civil wars, find repose in absolute monarchy, which it would have been happier for us to have established peaceably from the beginning. Absolute monarchy, therefore, is the easiest death, the true *Euthanasia* of the British constitution."

"Thus if we have more reason to be jealous of monarchy, because the danger is more imminent from that quarter, we have also reason to be more jealous of popular government, because that danger is more terrible. This may teach us a lesson of moderation in all our political controversies."—(III. 55.)

One may admire the sagacity of these speculations, and the force and clearness which they are expressed, without altogether agreeing with them. That an analogy between the social and bodily organism exists, and is, in many respects, clear and full of instructive suggestion, is undeniable. Yet a state answers, not to an individual, but to a generic type; and there is no reason, in the nature of things, why any generic type should die out. The type of the pearly *Nautilus*, highly organised as it is, has persisted with but little change from the Silurian epoch till now; and, so long as terrestrial conditions remain approximately similar to what they are at present, there is no more reason why it should cease to exist in the next, than in the past, hundred million years or so. The true ground for doubting the possibility of the establishment of absolute monarchy in Britain is, that opinion seems to have passed through, and left far behind, the stage at which such a change would be possible; and the true reason for doubting the permanency of a republic, if it is ever established, lies in the fact, that a republic

requires for its maintenance a far higher standard of morality and of intelligence in the members of the state than any other form of government. Samuel gave the Israelites a king because they were not righteous enough to do without one, with a pretty plain warning of what they were to expect from the gift. And, up to this time, the progress of such republics as have been established in the world has not been such as to lead to any confident expectation that their foundation is laid on a sufficiently secure subsoil of public spirit, morality, and intelligence. On the contrary, they exhibit examples of personal corruption and of political profligacy as fine as any hotbed of despotism has ever produced; while they fail in the primary duty of the administration of justice, as none but an effete despotism has ever failed.

Hume has been accused of departing, in his old age, from the liberal principles of his youth; and, no doubt, he was careful, in the later editions of the *Essays*, to expunge everything that savoured of democratic tendencies. But the passage just quoted shows that this was no recantation, but simply a confirmation, by his experience of one of the most debased periods of English history, of those evil tendencies attendant on popular government, of which, from the first, he was fully aware.

In the ninth essay, *On the Parties of Great Britain*, there occurs a passage which, while it affords evidence of the marvellous change which has taken place in the social condition of Scotland since 1741, contains an assertion respecting the state of the Jacobite party of that time, which at first seems surprising:—

"As violent things have not commonly so long a duration as moderate, we actually find that the Jacobite party is almost entirely vanished from among us, and that the distinction of *Court* and *Country*, which is but creeping in at London, is the only one that is ever mentioned in this kingdom. Beside the violence and openness of the Jacobite party, another reason has perhaps contributed to produce so sudden and so visible an alteration in this part of Britain. There are only two ranks of men among us; gentlemen who have some fortune and education, and the meanest slaving poor; without any considerable number of that middling rank of men which abound more in England, both in cities and the country, than in any other part of the world. The slaving poor are incapable of any principles; gentlemen may be converted to true principles by time and experience. The middling rank of men have curiosity and knowledge enough to form principles, but not enough to form true ones, or correct any prejudices that they may have imbibed. And it is among the middling rank of people that Tory principles do at present prevail most in England."—(III. 80, *note*.)

Considering that the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 broke out only four years after this essay was published, the assertion that the Jacobite party had "almost entirely vanished in 1741" sounds strange enough; and the passage which contains it is omitted in the third edition of the *Essays*, published in 1748. Nevertheless, Hume was probably right, as the outbreak of '45 was little better than a Highland raid, and the Pretender obtained no important following in the Lowlands.

No less curious, in comparison with what woula be said nowadays, is Hume's remark in the Essay on the *Rise of the Arts and Sciences* that—

"The English are become sensible of the scandalous licentiousness of their stage from the example of the French decency and morals."—(III. 135.)

And it is perhaps as surprising to be told, by a man of Hume's literary power, that the first polite prose in the English language was written by Swift. Locke and Temple (with whom Sprat is astoundingly conjoined) "knew too little of the rules of art to be esteemed elegant writers," and the prose of Bacon, Harrington, and Milton is ".altogether stiff and pedantic." Hobbes, who, whether he should be called a "polite" writer or not, is a master of vigorous English; Clarendon, Addison, and Steele (the last two, surely, were "polite" writers, in all conscience) are not mentioned.

On the subject of *National Character*, about which more nonsense, and often very mischievous nonsense, has been and is talked than upon any other topic, Hume's observations are full of sense and shrewdness. He distinguishes between the *moral* and the *physical* causes of national character, enumerating under the former—

"The nature of the government, the revolutions of public affairs, the plenty or penury in which people live, the situation of the nation with regard to its neighbors, and such like circumstances."—(III. 225.)

and under the latter :—

"Those qualities of the air and climate, which are supposed to work insensibly on the temper, by altering the tone and habit of the body, and giving a particular complexion, which, though reflexion and reason may sometimes overcome it, will yet prevail among the generality of mankind, and have an influence on their manners."—(III. 225.)

While admitting and exemplifying the great influence of moral causes, Hume remarks—

"As to physical causes, I am inclined to doubt altogether of their operation in this particular; nor do I think that men owe anything of their temper or genius to the air, food, or climate."—(III. 227.)

Hume certainly would not have accepted the "rice theory" in explanation of the social state of the Hindoos; and, it may be safely assumed, that he would not have had recourse to the circumambience of the "melancholy main" to account for the troublous history of Ireland. He supports his views by a variety of strong arguments, among which, at the present conjuncture, it is worth noting that the following occurs—

"Where any accident, as a difference in language or religion, keeps two nations, inhabiting the same country, from mixing with one another, they will preserve during several centuries a distinct and even opposite set

of manners. The integrity, gravity, and bravery of the Turks form an exact contrast to the deceit, levity, and cowardice of the modern Greeks." —(III. 233.)

The question of the influence of race, which plays so great a part in modern political speculations, was hardly broached in Hume's time, but he had an inkling of its importance :—

"I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilised nation of that complexion. nor even any individual, eminent either in action or speculation. . . . Such a uniform and constant difference [between the negroes and the whites] could not happen in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. . . . In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one Negro as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly."—(III. 236.)

The *Essays* met with the success they deserved. Hume wrote to Henry Home in June, 1742 :—

"The Essays are all sold in London, as I am informed by two letters from English gentlemen of my acquaintance. There is a demand for them; and, as one of them tells me, Innys, the great bookseller in Paul's Churchyard, wonders there is not a new edition, for he cannot find copies for his customers. I am also told that Dr. Butler has everywhere recommended them; so that I hope that they will have some success."

Hume had sent Butler a copy of the *Treatise*, and had called upon him in London, but he was out of town; and being shortly afterwards made Bishop of Bristol, Hume seems to have thought that further advances on his part might not be well received.

Greatly comforted by this measure of success, Hume remained at Ninewells, rubbing up his Greek, until 1745; when at the mature age of thirty-four, he made his entry into practical life, by becoming bear-leader to the Marquis of Annandale, a young nobleman of feeble body and feebler mind. As might have been predicted, this venture was not more fortunate than his previous ones; and, after a year's endurance, diversified latterly with pecuniary squabbles, in which Hume's tenacity about a somewhat small claim is remarkable, the engagement came to an end.

CHAPTER II.

LATER YEARS: THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

In 1744, Hume's friends had endeavoured to procure his nomination to the Chair of "Ethics and pneumatic philosophy" * in the University of Edinburgh. About this matter he writes to his friend William Mure:—

"The accusation of heresy, deism, scepticism, atheism, &c., &c., &c., was started against me; but never took, being bore down by the contrary authority of all the good company in town."

If the "good company in town" bore down the first three of these charges, it is to be hoped, for the sake of their veracity, that they knew their candidate chiefly as the very good company that he always was; and had paid as little attention, as good company usually does, to so solid a work as the *Treatise*. Hume expresses a naïve surprise, not unmixed with indignation, that Hutcheson and Leechman, both clergymen and sincere, though liberal, professors of orthodoxy, should have expressed doubts as to his fitness for becoming a professedly Presbyterian teacher of Presbyterian youth. The town council, however, would not have him, and filled up the place with a safe nobody.

In May, 1746, a new prospect opened. General St. Clair was appointed to the command of an expedition to Canada, and he invited Hume, at a week's notice, to be his secretary; to which office, that of judge-advocate was afterwards added.

Hume writes to a friend: "The office is very genteel, 10*s.* a day, perquisites, and no expenses;" and, to another, he speculates on the chance of procuring a company in an American regiment. "But this I build not on, nor indeed am I very fond of it," he adds; and this was fortunate, for the expedition, after dawdling away the summer in port, was suddenly diverted to an attack on L'Orient, where it achieved a huge failure and returned ignominiously to England.

A letter to Henry Home, written when this unlucky expedition was recalled, shows that Hume had already seriously turned his

* "Pneumatic philosophy" must not be confounded with the theory of elastic fluids; though, as Scottish chairs have, before now, combined natural with civil history, the mistake would be pardonable.

attention to history. Referring to an invitation to go over to Flanders with the General, he says:

"Had I any fortune which would give me a prospect of leisure and opportunity to prosecute my *historical projects*, nothing could be more useful to me, and I should pick up more literary knowledge in one campaign by being in the General's family, and being introduced frequently to the Duke's, than most officers could do after many years' service. But to what can all this serve? I am a philosopher, and so I suppose must continue."

But this vaticination was shortly to prove erroneous. Hume seems to have made a very favourable impression on General St. Clair, as he did upon every one with whom he came into personal contact; for, being charged with a mission to the court of Turin, in 1748, the General insisted upon the appointment of Hume as his secretary. He further made him one of his aides-de-camp; so that the philosopher was obliged to encase his more than portly, and by no means elegant, figure in a military uniform. Lord Charlemont who met him at Turin, says he was "disguised in scarlet," and that he wore his uniform "like a grocer of the train-bands." Hume, always ready for a joke at his own expense, tells of the considerate kindness with which, at a reception at Vienna, the Empress-dowager released him and his friends from the necessity of walking backwards. "We esteemed ourselves very much obliged to her for this attention, especially my companions, who were desperate afraid of my falling on them and crushing them."

Notwithstanding the many attractions of this appointment, Hume writes that he leaves home "with infinite regret, where I had treasured up stores of study and plans of thinking for many years;" and his only consolation is that the opportunity of becoming conversant with state affairs may be profitable:—

"I shall have an opportunity of seeing courts and camps: and if I can afterwards be so happy as to attain leisure and other opportunities, this knowledge may even turn to account to me as a man of letters, which I confess has always been the sole object of my ambition. I have long had an intention, in my riper years, of composing some history; and I question not but some greater experience in the operations of the field and the intrigues of the cabinet will be requisite, in order to enable me to speak with judgment on these subjects."

Hume returned to London in 1749, and, during his stay there, his mother died, to his heartfelt sorrow. A curious story in connection with this event is told by Dr. Carlyle, who knew Hume well, and whose authority is perfectly trustworthy.

"Mr. Boyle hearing of it, soon after went to his apartment, for they lodged in the same house, where he found him in the deepest affliction and in a flood of tears. After the usual topics and condolences Mr. Boyle said to him, 'My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to having thrown off the principles of religion; for if you had not, you would have been consoled with the firm belief that the good lady who was not only the best of

mothers, but the most pious of Christians, was completely happy in the realms of the just.' To which David replied, 'Though I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet in other things I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine."

If Hume had told his story to Dr. Carlyle, the latter would have said so; it must therefore have come from Mr. Boyle; and one would like to have the opportunity of cross-examining that gentleman as to Hume's exact words and their context, before implicitly accepting his version of the conversation. Mr. Boyle's experience of mankind must have been small, if he had not seen the firmest of believers overwhelmed with grief by a like loss, and as completely inconsolable. Hume may have thrown off Mr. Boyle's "principles of religion," but he was none the less a very honest man, perfectly open and candid, and the last person to use ambiguous phraseology among his friends; unless, indeed, he saw no other way of putting a stop to the intrusion of unmannerly twaddle amongst the bitter-sweet memories stirred in his affectionate nature by so heavy a blow.

The *Philosophical Essays* or *Inquiry* was published in 1748, while Hume was away with General St. Clair, and on his return to England he had the mortification to find it overlooked in the hubbub caused by Middleton's *Free Inquiry*, and its bold handling of the topic of the *Essay on Miracles*, by which Hume doubtless expected the public to be startled.

Between 1749 and 1751, Hume resided at Ninewells, with his brother and sister, and busied himself with the composition of his most finished, if not his most important works, the *Dialogues on Natural Religion*, the *Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, and the *Political Discourses*.

The *Dialogues on Natural Religion* were touched and retouched, at intervals, for a quarter of a century, and were not published till after Hume's death: but the *Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* appeared in 1751, and the *Political Discourses* in 1752. Full reference will be made to the two former in the exposition of Hume's philosophical views. The last has been well said to be the "cradle of political economy: and much as that science has been investigated and expounded in later times, these earliest, shortest, and simplest developments of its principles are still read with delight even by those who are masters of all the literature of this great subject."*

The *Wealth of Nations*, the masterpiece of Hume's close friend, Adam Smith, it must be remembered, did not appear before 1776, so that, in political economy, no less than in philosophy, Hume was an original, a daring, and a fertile innovator.

The *Political Essays* had a great and rapid success; translated into French in 1753, and again in 1754, they conferred a European reputation upon their author: and, what was more to the purpose,

* Burton's *Life of David Hume*, i. p. 354.

influenced the later French school of economists of the eighteenth century.

By this time, Hume had not only attained a high reputation in the world of letters, but he considered himself a man of independent fortune. His frugal habits had enabled him to accumulate £1,000, and he tells Michael Ramsay in 1751:—

"While interest remains as at present, I have £50 a year, a hundred pounds' worth of books, great stores of linens and fine clothes, and near £100 in my pocket; along with order, frugality, a strong spirit of independency, good health, a contented humour, and an unabated love of study. In these circumstances I must esteem myself one of the happy and fortunate; and so far from being willing to draw my ticket over again in the lottery of life, there are very few prizes with which I would make an exchange. After some deliberation, I am resolved to settle in Edinburgh, and hope I shall be able with these revenues to say with Horace:—

'Est bona librorum et provisæ frugis in annum
Copia.'"

It would be difficult to find a better example of the honourable independence and cheerful self-reliance which should distinguish a man of letters, and which characterised Hume throughout his career. By honourable effort, the boy's noble ideal of life became the man's reality; and, at forty, Hume had the happiness of finding that he had not wasted his youth in the pursuit of illusions, but that "the solid certainty of waking bliss" lay before him, in the free play of his powers in their appropriate sphere.

In 1751 Hume removed to Edinburgh, and took up his abode on a flat in one of those prodigious houses in the Lawnmarket, which still excite the admiration of tourists; afterwards moving to a house in the Canongate. His sister joined him, adding £30 a year to the common stock; and, in one of his charmingly playful letters to Dr. Clephane, he thus describes his establishment, in 1753.

"I shall exult and triumph to you a little that I have now at last—being turned of forty, to mine own honour, to that of learning, and to that of the present age—arrived at the dignity of being a householder.

"About seven months ago, I got a house of my own, and completed a regular family, consisting of a head, viz., myself, and two inferior members, a maid and a cat. My sister has since joined me, and keeps me company. With frugality, I can reach, I find, cleanliness, warmth, light, plenty, and contentment. What would you have more? Independence? I have it in a supreme degree. Honour? That is not altogether wanting. Grace? That will come in time. A wife? That is none of the indispensable requisites of life. Books? That *is* one of them; and I have more than I can use. In short, I cannot find any pleasure of consequence which I am not possessed of in a greater or less degree; and, without any great effort of philosophy, I may be easy and satisfied.

"As there is no happiness without occupation, I have begun a work which will occupy me several years, and which yields me much satisfaction. 'Tis a History of Britain from the Union of the Crowns to the pres-

ent time. I have already finished the reign of King James. My friends flatter me (by this I mean that they don't flatter me) that I have succeeded."

In 1752, the Faculty of Advocates elected Hume their librarian, an office which, though it yielded little emolument—the salary was only forty pounds a year—was valuable, as it placed the resources of a large library at his disposal. The proposal to give Hume even this paltry place caused a great outcry, on the old score of infidelity, But as Hume writes, in a jubilant letter to Clephane (February 4, 1752) :—

"I carried the election by a considerable majority. . . . What is more extraordinary, the cry of religion could not hinder the ladies from being violently my partisans, and I owe my success in a great measure to their solicitations. One has broke off all commerce with her lover because he voted against me! And Mr. Lockhart, in a speech to the Faculty, said there was no walking the streets, nor even enjoying one's own fireside, on account of their importunate zeal. The town says that even his bed was not safe for him, though his wife was cousin-german to my antagonist.

"'Twas vulgarly given out that the contest was between Deists and Christians, and when the news of my success came to the playhouse, the whisper rose that the Christians were defeated. Are you not surprised that we could keep our popularity, notwithstanding this imputation, which my friends could not deny to be well founded?"

It would seem that the "good company" was less enterprising in its asseverations in this canvass than in the last.

The first volume of the *History of Great Britain, containing the reign of James I. and Charles I.*, was published in 1754. At first, the sale was large, especially in Edinburgh, and if notoriety *per se* was Hume's object, he attained it. But he liked applause as well as fame, and, to his bitter disappointment, he says :—

"I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation; and even detestation: English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, Churchman and Sectary, Freethinker and Religionist, Patriot and Courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to fall into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me that in a twelvemonth, he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Hefring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged."

It certainly is odd to think of David Hume being comforted in his affliction by the independent and spontaneous sympathy of a pair of archbishops. But the instincts of the dignified prelates guided them rightly; for, as the great painter of English history in Whig pigments has been careful to point out,* Hume's historical picture,

* Lord Macaulay, Article on History, *Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxvii.

though a great work, drawn by a master hand, has all the lights Tory, and all the shades Whig.

Hume's ecclesiastical enemies seem to have thought that their opportunity had now arrived; and an attempt was made to get the General Assembly of 1756 to appoint a committee to inquire into his writings. But, after a keen debate, the proposal was rejected by fifty votes to seventeen. Hume does not appear to have troubled himself about the matter, and does not even think it worth mention in *My Own Life.*

In 1756 he tells Clephane that he is worth £1,600 sterling, and consequently master of an income which must have been wealth to a man of his frugal habits. In the same year, he published the second volume of the *History*, which met with a much better reception than the first; and, in 1757, one of his most remarkable works, the *Natural History of Religion*, appeared. In the same year, he resigned his office of librarian to the Faculty of Advocates, and he projected removal to London, probably to superintend the publication of the additional volume of the *History.*

"I shall certainly be in London next summer; and probably to remain there during life; at least, if I can settle myself to my mind, which I beg you to have an eye to. A room in a sober, discreet family, who would not be averse to admit a sober, discreet, virtuous, regular, quiet, good-natured man of a bad character—such a room, I say, would suit me extremely." *

The promised visit took place in the latter part of the year 1758, and he remained in the metropolis for the greater part of 1759. The two volumes of the *History of England under the House of Tudor* were published in London, shortly after Hume's return to Edinburgh; and, according to his own account, they raised almost as great a clamour as the first two had done.

Busily occupied with the continuation of his historical labours, Hume remained in Edinburgh until 1763; when, at the request of Lord Hertford, who was going as ambassador to France, he was appointed to the embassy; with the promise of the secretaryship, and, in the meanwhile, performing the duties of that office. At first, Hume declined the offer; but, as it was particularly honourable to so well abused a man, on account of Lord Hertford's high reputation for virtue and piety,† and no less advantageous by reason of the increase of fortune which it secured to him, he eventually accepted it.

In France, Hume's reputation stood far higher than in Britain; several of his works had been translated; he had exchanged letters with Montesquieu and with Helvetius; Rousseau had appealed to him; and the charming Madame de Boufflers had drawn him into a

* Letter to Clephane. 3d September, 1757.

† "You must know that Lord Hertford has so high a character for piety, that his taking me by the hand is a kind of regeneration to me, and all past offences are now wiped off. But all these views are trifling to one of my age and temper."—*Hume to Edmondstone*, 9th January, 1764. Lord Hertford had procured him a pension of £200 a year for life from the King, and the secretaryship was worth £1,000 year.

correspondence, marked by almost passionate enthusiasm on her part, and as fair an imitation of enthusiasm as Hume was capable of, on his. In the extraordinary mixture of learning, wit, humanity, frivolity, and profligacy which then characterised the highest French society, a new sensation was worth anything, and it mattered little whether the cause thereof was a philosopher or a poodle; so Hume had a great success in the Parisian world. Great nobles fêted him, and great ladies were not content unless the "gros David" was to be seen at their receptions and in their boxes at the theatre. "At the opera his broad unmeaning face was usually to be seen *entre deux jolis minois*," says Lord Charlemont * Hume's cool head was by no means turned; but he took the goods the gods provided with much satisfaction, and everywhere won golden opinions by his unaffected good sense and thorough kindness of heart.

Over all this part of Hume's career, as over the surprising episode of the quarrel with Rousseau, if that can be called quarrel which was lunatic malignity on Rousseau's side and thorough generosity and patience on Hume's, I may pass lightly. The story is admirably told by Mr. Burton, to whose volumes I refer the reader. Nor need I dwell upon Hume's short tenure of office in London, as Under-Secretary of state, between 1767 and 1769. Success and wealth are rarely interesting, and Hume's case is no exception to the rule.

According to his own description, the cares of official life were not overwhelming.

"My way of life here is very uniform and by no means disagreeable. I have all the forenoon in the Secretary's house, from ten till three, when there arrive from time to time messengers that bring me all the secrets of the kingdom, and, indeed of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I am seldom hurried; but have leisure at intervals to take up a book, or write a private letter, or converse with a friend that may call for me; and from dinner to bed-time is all my own. If you add to this that the person with whom I have the chief, if not only, transactions, is the most reasonable, equal-tempered, and gentleman-like man imaginable, and Lady Aylesbury the same, you will certainly think I have no reason to complain; and I am far from complaining. I only shall not regret when my duty is over; because to me the situation can lead to nothing, at least in all probability; and reading, and sauntering, and lounging, and dozing, which I call thinking, is my supreme happiness—I mean my full contentment."

Hume's duty was soon over, and he returned to Edinburgh in 1769, "very opulent" in the possession of £1,000 a year, and determined to take what remained to him of life pleasantly and easily. In October, 1769, he writes to Elliot:—

* Madame d'Epinay gives a ludicrous account of Hume's performance when passed into a *tableau*, as a sultan between two slaves, personated for the occasion by two of the prettiest women in Paris:—

"Il les regarde attentivement, *il se frappe le ventre* et les genoux à plusieurs reprises et ne trouve jamais autre chose à leur dire que *Eh bien! mes demoiselles.—Eh bien! vous voilà donc....Eh bien! vous voilà ....vous voilà ici?* Cette phrase dura un quart d'heure sans qu'il pût en sortir. Une d'elles se leva d'impatience: Ah, ditelle, je m'en étois bien doutée, cet homme n'est bon qu'à manger du veau!"—Burton's *Life of Hume*, vol. ii. p. 224.

"I have been settled here two months, and am here body and soul, without casting the least thought of regret to London, or even to Paris. . . . I live still, and must for a twelvemonth, in my old house in James's Court, which is very cheerful and even elegant, but too small to display my great talent for cookery, the science to which I intend to addict the remaining years of my life. I have just now lying on the table before me a receipt for making *soup à la reine* copied with my own hand; for beef and cabbage (a charming dish) and old mutton and old claret nobody excels me. I make also sheep's-head broth in a manner that Mr. Keith speaks of for eight days after; and the Duc de Nivernois would bind himself apprentice to my lass to learn it. I have already sent a challenge to David Moncreiff: you will see that in a twelvemonth he will take to the writing of history, the field I have deserted; for as to the giving of dinners, he can now have no further pretensions. I should have made a very bad use of my abode in Paris if I could not get the better of a mere provincial like him. All my friends encourage me in this ambition; as thinking it will redound very much to my honour."

In 1770, Hume built himself a house in the New Town of Edinburgh, which was then springing up. It was the first house in the street, and a frolicsome young lady chalked upon the wall "St. David's Street." Hume's servant complained to her master, who replied, "Never mind, lassie, many a better man has been made a saint of before," and the street retains its title to this day.

In the following six years, the house in St. David's Street was the centre of the accomplished and refined society which then distinguished Edinburgh. Adam Smith, Blair, and Ferguson were within easy reach; and what remains of Hume's correspondence with Sir Gilbert Elliot, Colonel Edmonstone, and Mrs. Cockburn gives pleasant glimpses of his social surroundings, and enables us to understand his contentment with his absence from the more perturbed, if more brilliant, worlds of Paris and London.

Towards London, Londoners, and indeed Englishmen in general, Hume entertained a dislike, mingled with contempt, which was as nearly rancorous as any emotions of his could be. During his residence in Paris, in 1764 and 1765, he writes to Blair:—

"The taste for literature is neither decayed nor depraved here, as with the barbarians who inhabit the banks of the Thames."

And he speaks of the "general regard paid to genius and learning" in France as one of the points in which it most differs from England. Ten years later, he cannot even thank Gibbon for his History without the left-handed compliment, that he should never have expected such an excellent work from the pen of an Englishman. Early in 1765, Hume writes to Millar:—

"The rage and prejudice of parties frighten me, and, above all, this rage against the Scots, which is so dishonourable, and indeed so infamous, to the English nation. We hear that it increases every day without the least appearance of provocation on our part. It has frequently made me resolve never in my life to set foot on English ground. I dread, if I should

undertake a more modern history, the impertinence and ill-manners to which it would expose me; and I was willing to know from you whether former prejudices had so far subsided as to ensure me of a good reception."

His fears were kindly appeased by Millar's assurance that the English were not prejudiced against the Scots in general, but against the particular Scot, Lord Bute, who was supposed to be the guide, philosopher, and friend, of both Dowager Queen and King.

To care nothing about literature, to dislike Scotchmen, and to be insensible to the merits of David Hume, was a combination of iniquities on the part of the English nation, which would have been amply sufficient to ruffle the temper of the philosophic historian, who, without being foolishly vain, had certainly no need of what has been said to be the one form of prayer in which his countrymen, torn as they are by theological differences, agree; "Lord! gie us a gude conceit o' oursels." But when, to all this, these same Southrons added a passionate admiration for Lord Chatham, who was in Hume's eyes a charlatan; and filled up the cup of their abominations by cheering for "Wilkes and Liberty," Hume's wrath knew no bounds, and, between 1768 and 1770, he pours a perfect Jeremiad into the bosom of his friend Sir Gilbert Elliot.

"Oh! how I long to see America and the East Indies revolted totally and finally—the revenue reduced to half—public credit fully discredited by bankruptcy—the third of London in ruins, and the rascally mob subdued! I think I am not too old to despair of being witness to all these blessings.

"I am delighted to see the daily and hourly progress of madness and folly and wickedness in England. The consummation of these qualities are the true ingredients for making a fine narrative in history, especially if followed by some signal and ruinous convulsion—as I hope will soon be the case with that pernicious people!"

Even from the secure haven of James's Court, the maledictions continue to pour forth:—

"Nothing but a rebellion and bloodshed will open the eyes of that deluded people; though were they alone concerned, I think it is no matter what becomes of them. . . . Our government has become a chimera, and is too perfect, in point of liberty, for so rude a beast as an Englishman; who is a man, a bad animal too, corrupted by above a century of licentiousness. The misfortune is that this liberty can scarcely be retrenched without danger of being entirely lost; at least the fatal effects of licentiousness must first be made palpable by some extreme mischief resulting from it. I may wish that the catastrophe should rather fall on our posterity, but it hastens on with such large strides as to leave little room for hope.

"I am running over again the last edition of my History, in order to correct it still further. I either soften or expunge many villainous seditious Whig strokes which had crept into it. I wish that my indignation at the present madness, encouraged by lies, calumnies, imposture, and every infamous act usual among popular leaders, may not throw me into the opposite extreme."

A wise wish, indeed. Posterity respectfully concurs therein; and subjects Hume's estimate of England and things English to such modifications as it would probably have undergone had the wish been fulfilled.

In 1775 Hume's health began to fail; and, in the spring of the following year, his disorder, which appears to have been hæmorrhage of the bowels, attained such a height that he knew it must be fatal. So he made his will, and wrote *My Own Life*, the conclusion of which is one of the most cheerful, simple, and dignified leave-takings of life and all its concerns, extant.

"I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and, what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of spirits; insomuch that were I to name the period of my life which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this later period. I possess the same ardour as ever in study and the same gaiety in company; I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation's breaking out at last with additional lustre, I know that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

"To conclude historically with my own character, I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men anywise eminent have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched or even attacked by her baleful tooth; and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct; not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained."

Hume died in Edinburgh on the 25th of August, 1776, and, a few days later, his body, attended by a great concourse of people, who seem to have anticipated for it the fate appropriate to the remains of wizards and necromancers, was deposited in a spot selected by himself, in an old burial-ground on the eastern slope of the Calton Hill.

From the summit of this hill, there is a prospect unequalled by any to be seen from the midst of a great city. Westward lies the

Forth, and beyond it, dimly blue, the far away Highland hills; eastward, rise the bold contours of Arthur's Seat and the rugged crags of the Castle rock, with the gray Old Town of Edinburgh; while, far below, from a maze of crowded thoroughfares, the hoarse murmur of the toil of a polity of energetic men is borne upon the ear. At times, a man may be as solitary here as in a veritable wilderness; and may meditate undisturbedly upon the epitome of nature and of man—the kingdoms of this world—spread out before him.

Surely, there is a fitness in the choice of this last resting-place by the philosopher and historian, who saw so clearly that these two kingdoms form but one realm, governed by uniform laws and alike based on impenetrable darkness and eternal silence: and, faithful to the last to that profound veracity which was the secret of his philosophic greatness, he ordered that the simple Roman tomb which marks his grave should bear no inscription but

DAVID HUME

BORN 1711. DIED 1776.

Leaving it to posterity to add the rest.

It was by the desire and at the suggestion of my friend, the Editor of this Series, that I undertook to attempt to help posterity in the difficult business of knowing what to add to Hume's epitaph; and I might, with justice, throw upon him the responsibility of my apparent presumption in occupying a place among the men of letters, who engaged with him, in their proper function of writing about English Men of Letters.

That to which succeeding generations have made, are making, and will make, continual additions, however, is Hume's fame as a philosopher; and, though I know that my plea will add to my offence in some quarters, I must plead, in extenuation of my audacity, that philosophy lies in the province of science, and not in that of letters.

In dealing with Hume's Life, I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to make him speak for himself. If the extracts from his letters and essays which I have given do not sufficiently show what manner of man he was, I am sure that nothing I could say would make the case plainer. In the exposition of Hume's philosophy which follows, I have pursued the same plan, and I have applied myself to the task of selecting and arranging in systematic order, the passages which appeared to me to contain the clearest statements of Hume's opinions.

I should have been glad to be able to confine myself to this duty, and to limit my own comments to so much as was absolutely necessary to connect my excerpts. Here and there, however, it must be confessed that more is seen of my thread than of Hume's beads. My excuse must be an ineradicable tendency to try to make things clear; while, I may further hope, that there is nothing

in what I may have said which is inconsistent with the logica development of Hume's principles.

My authority for the facts of Hume's life is the admirable biography, published in 1846, by Mr. John Hill Burton. The edition of Hume's works from which all citations are made is that published by Black and Tait in Edinburgh, in 1826. In this edition, the Essays are reprinted from the edition of 1777, corrected by the author for the press a short time before his death. It is well printed in four handy volumes; and as my copy has long been in my possession, and bears marks of much reading, it would have been troublesome for me to refer to any other. But, for the convenience of those who possess some other edition, the following table of the contents of the edition of 1826, with the paging of the four volumes, is given :—

VOLUME I.

TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE.

Book I. *Of the Understanding*, p. 5 to the end, p. 347.

VOLUME II.

TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE.

Book II. *Of the Passions* p. 3—p. 215.

Book III. *Of Morals*, p. 219—p. 415.

DIALOGUES CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION, p. 419—p. 548.

APPENDIX TO THE TREATISE, p. 551—p. 560.

VOLUME III.

ESSAYS, MORAL AND POLITICAL, p. 3—p. 282.

POLITICAL DISCOURSES, p. 285—p. 579.

VOLUME IV.

AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, p. 3—p. 233.

AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS, p. 237—p. 431.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF RELIGION, p. 435—p. 513.

ADDITIONAL ESSAYS, p. 517—p. 577.

As the volume and the page of the volume are given in my references, it will be easy, by the help of this table, to learn where to look for any passage cited, in differently arranged editions.

PART II.

HUME'S PHILOSOPHY.

CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECT AND SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY.

KANT has said that the business of philosophy is to answer three questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? and For what may I hope? But it is pretty plain that these three resolve themselves, in the long run, into the first. For rational expectation and moral action are alike based upon beliefs; and a belief is void of justification unless its subject-matter lies within the boundaries of possible knowledge, and unless its evidence satisfies the conditions which experience imposes as the guarantee of credibility.

Fundamentally, then, philosophy is the answer to the question, What can I know? and it is by applying itself to this problem, that philosophy is properly distinguished as a special department of scientific research. What is commonly called science, whether mathematical, physical, or biological, consists of the answers which mankind have been able to give to the inquiry, What do I know? They furnish us with the results of the mental operations which constitute thinking; while philosophy, in the stricter sense of the term, inquires into the foundation of the first principles which those operations assume or imply.

But though, by reason of the special purpose of philosophy, its distinctness from other branches of scientific investigation may be properly vindicated, it is easy to see that, from the nature of its subject-matter, it is intimately and, indeed, inseparably connected with one branch of science. For it is obviously impossible to answer the question, What can we know? unless, in the first place, there is a clear understanding as to what is meant by knowledge; and, having settled this point, the next step is to inquire how we come by that which we allow to be knowledge; for, upon the reply, turns the answer to the further question, whether, from the nature of the case, there are limits to the knowable or not. While, finally,

inasmuch as What can I know? not only refers to knowledge of the past or of the present, but to the confident expectation which we call knowledge of the future; it is necessary to ask, further, what justification can be alleged for trusting to the guidance of our expectations in practical conduct.

It surely needs no argumentation to show, that the first problem cannot be approached without the examination of the contents of the mind; and the determination of how much of these contents may be called knowledge. Nor can the second problem be dealt with in any other fashion; for it is only by the observation of the growth of knowledge that we can rationally hope to discover how knowledge grows. But the solution of the third problem simply involves the discussion of the data obtained by the investigation of the foregoing two.

Thus, in order to answer three out of the four subordinate questions into which What can I know? breaks up, we must have recourse to that investigation of mental phenomena, the results of which are embodied in the science of psychology.

Psychology is a part of the science of life or biology, which differs from the other branches of that science, merely in so far as it deals with the psychical, instead of the physical, phenomena of life.

As there is an anatomy of the body, so there is an anatomy of the mind; the psychologist dissects mental phenomena into elementary states of consciousness, as the anatomist resolves limbs into tissues, and tissues into cells. The one traces the development of complex organs from simple rudiments: the other follows the building up of complex conceptions out of simpler constituents of thought. As the physiologist inquires into the way in which the so-called "functions" of the body are performed, so the psychologist studies the so-called "faculties" of the mind. Even a cursory attention to the ways and works of the lower animals suggests a comparative anatomy and physiology of the mind; and the doctrine of evolution presses for application as much in the one field as in the other.

But there is more than a parallel, there is a close and intimate connection between psychology and physiology. No one doubts that, at any rate, some mental states are dependent for their existence on the performance of the functions of particular bodily organs. There is no seeing without eyes, and no hearing without ears. If the origin of the contents of the mind is truly a philosophical problem, then the philosopher who attempts to deal with that problem, without acquainting himself with the physiology of sensation, has no more intelligent conception of his business than the physiologist, who thinks he can discuss locomotion, without an acquaintance with the principles of mechanics; or respiration, without some tincture of chemistry.

On whatever ground we term physiology, science, psychology is entitled to the same appellation; and the method of investigation which elucidates the true relations of the one set of phenomena

will discover those of the other. Hence, as philosophy is in great measure, the exponent of the logical consequences of certain data established by psychology; and as psychology itself differs from physical science only in the nature of its subject matter, and not in its method of investigation, it would seem to be an obvious conclusion, that philosophers are likely to be successful in their inquiries, in proportion as they are familiar with the application of scientific method to less abstruse subjects; just as it seems to require no elaborate demonstration that an astronomer, who wishes to comprehend the solar system, would do well to acquire a preliminary acquaintance with the elements of physics. And it is accordant with this presumption, that the men who have made the most important positive additions to philosophy, such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant, not to mention more recent examples, have been deeply imbued with the spirit of physical science; and, in some cases, such as those of Descartes and Kant, have been largely acquainted with its details. On the other hand, the founder of Positivism no less admirably illustrates the connexion of scientific incapacity with philosophical incompetence. In truth, the laboratory is the fore-court of the temple of philosophy; and whoso has not offered sacrifices and undergone purification there, has little chance of admission into the sanctuary.

Obvious as these considerations may appear to be, it would be wrong to ignore the fact that their force is by no means universally admitted. On the contrary, the necessity for a proper psychological and physiological training to the student of philosophy is denied, on the one hand, by the "pure metaphysicians," who attempt to base the theory of knowing upon supposed necessary and universal truths, and assert that scientific observation is impossible unless such truths are already known or implied: which, to those who are not "pure metaphysicians," seems very much as if one should say that the fall of a stone cannot be observed, unless the law of gravitation is already in the mind of the observer.

On the other hand, the Positivists, so far as they accept the teachings of their master, roundly assert, at any rate in words, that observation of the mind is a thing inherently impossible in itself, and that psychology is a chimera—a phantasm generated by the fermentation of the dregs of theology. Nevertheless, if M. Comte had been asked what he meant by "physiologie cérébrale," except that which other people call "psychology;" and how he knew anything about the functions of the brain, except by that very "observation intérieure," which he declares to be an absurdity—it seems probable that he would have found it hard to escape the admission that, in vilipending psychology, he had been propounding solemn nonsense.

It is assuredly one of Hume's greatest merits that he clearly recognised the fact that philosophy is based upon psychology; and that the inquiry into the contents and the operations of the mind must be conducted upon the same principles as a physical investigation, if what he calls the "moral philosopher" would attain re-

sults of as firm and definite a character as those which reward the "natural philosopher." * The title of his first work, a "*Treatise of Human Nature, being an Attempt to introduce the Experimental method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*," sufficiently indicates the point of view from which Hume regarded philosophical problems; and he tells us in the preface, that his object has been to promote the construction of a "science of man."

"'Tis evident that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature; and that, however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even *Mathematics*, *Natural Philosophy*, and *Natural Religion* are in some measure dependent on the science of MAN; since they lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and qualities. 'Tis impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding, and could explain the nature of the ideas we employ and of the operations we perform in our reasonings. . . . To me it seems evident that the essence of mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects which result from its different circumstances and situations. And although we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to the utmost, and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes, 'tis still certain we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical. . . .

"But if this impossibility of explaining ultimate principles should be esteemed a defect in the science of man, I will venture to affirm, that it is a defect common to it with all the sciences, and all the arts, in which we can employ ourselves, whether they be such as are cultivated in the schools of the philosophers, or practised in the shops of the meanest artisans. None of them can go beyond experience, or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority. Moral philosophy has, indeed, this peculiar disadvantage, which is not found in natural, that in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them purposely, with premeditation, and after such a manner as to satisfy itself concerning every particular difficulty which may arise. When I am at a loss to know the effects of one body upon another in any situation, I need only put them in that situation, and observe what results from it. But should I endeavour to clear up in the same manner any † doubt in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phenomenon. We must, therefore, glean up our experiments in this science from

* In a letter to Hutcheson (September 17th, 1739) Hume remarks:—"There are different ways of examining the mind as well as the body. One may consider it either as an anatomist or as a painter: either to discover its most secret springs and principles, or to describe the grace and beauty of its actions;" and he proceeds to justify his own mode of looking at the moral sentiments from the anatomist's point of view.

† The manner in which Hume constantly refers to the results of the observation of the contents and the processes of his own mind clearly shows that he has here inadvertently overstated the case.

a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. Where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility, to any other of human comprehension."—(I. pp. 7—11.)

All science starts with hypotheses—in other words, with assumptions that are unproved, while they may be, and often are, erroneous; but which are better than nothing to the seeker after order in the maze of phenomena. And the historical progress of every science depends on the criticism of hypotheses—on the gradual stripping off, that is, of their untrue or superfluous parts—until there remains only that exact verbal expression of as much as we know of the fact, and no more, which constitutes a perfect scientific theory.

Philosophy has followed the same course as other branches of scientific investigation. The memorable service rendered to the cause of sound thinking by Descartes consisted in this: that he laid the foundation of modern philosophical criticism by his inquiry into the nature of certainty. It is a clear result of the investigation started by Descartes, that there is one thing of which no doubt can be entertained, for he who should pretend to doubt it would thereby prove its existence; and that is the momentary consciousness we call a present thought or feeling; that is safe, even if all other kinds of certainty are merely more or less probable inferences. Berkeley and Locke, each in his way, applied philosophical criticism in other directions; but they always, at any rate professedly, followed the Cartesian maxim of admitting no propositions to be true but such as are clear, distinct, and evident, even while their arguments stripped off many a layer of hypothetical assumption which their great predecessor had left untouched. No one has more clearly stated the aims of the critical philosopher than Locke, in a passage of the famous *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, which, perhaps, I ought to assume to be well known to all English readers, but which so probably is unknown to this full-crammed and much-examined generation that I venture to cite it:

"If by this inquiry into the nature of the understanding I can discover the powers thereof, how far they reach, to what things they are in any degree proportionate, and where they fail us, I suppose it may be of use to prevail with the busy mind of man to be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its comprehension: to stop when it is at the utmost extent of its tether; and to sit down in quiet ignorance of those things which, upon examination, are proved to be beyond the reach of our capacities. We should not then, perhaps, be so forward, out of an affectation of universal knowledge, to raise questions and perplex ourselves and others with disputes about things to which our understandings are not suited, and of which we cannot frame in our minds any clear and distinct perception, or whereof (as it has, perhaps, too often happened) we have not any notion at all. . . . Men may find matter sufficient to busy their heads and employ their hands with variety, delight, and satisfaction, if

they will not boldly quarrel with their own constitution and throw away the blessings their hands are filled with because they are not big enough to grasp everything. We shall not have much reason to complain of the narrowness of our minds, if we will but employ them about what may be of use to us: for of that they are very capable: and it will be an unpardonable, as well as a childish peevishness, if we undervalue the advantages of our knowledge, and neglect to improve it to the ends for which it was given us, because there are some things that are set out of the reach of it. It will be no excuse to an idle and untoward servant who would not attend to his business by candlelight, to plead that he had not broad sunshine. The candle that is set up in us shines bright enough for all our purposes. . . . Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct." *

Hume develops the same fundamental conception in a somewhat different way, and with a more definite indication of the practical benefits which may be expected from a critical philosophy. The first and second parts of the twelfth section of the *Inquiry* are devoted to a condemnation of excessive scepticism, or Pyrrhonism. with which Hume couples a caricature of the Cartesian doubt; but, in the third part, a certain "mitigated scepticism" is recommended and adopted, under the title of "academical philosophy." After pointing out that a knowledge of the infirmities of the human understanding, even in its most perfect state, and when most accurate and cautious in its determinations, is the best check upon the tendency to dogmatism, Hume continues:—

"Another species of *mitigated* scepticism, which may be of advantage to mankind, and which may be the natural result of the PYRRHONIAN doubts and scruples, in the limitation of our inquiries to such subjects as are best adapted to the narrow capacity of human understanding. The *imagination* of man is naturally sublime, delighted with whatever is remote and extraordinary, and running, without control, into the most distant parts of space and time in order to avoid the objects which custom has rendered too familiar to it. A correct *judgment* observes a contrary method, and, avoiding all distant and high inquiries, confines itself to common life, and to such subjects as fall under daily practice and experience; leaving the more sublime topics to the embellishment of poets, and orators, or to the arts of priests and politicians. To bring us to so salutary a determination, nothing can be more servicable than to be once thoroughly convinced of the force of the PYRRHONIAN doubt and of the impossibility that nothing but the strong power of natural instinct could free us from it. Those who have a propensity to philosophy will still continue their researches; because they reflect that, besides the immediate pleasure attending such an occupation, philosophical decisions are nothing but the reflections of common life, methodised and corrected. But they will never be tempted to go beyond common life, so long as they consider the imperfection of those faculties which they employ, their narrow reach, and their inaccurate operations. While we cannot give a satisfactory reason why we believe, after a thousand experiments, that a stone will fall or fire burn; can we ever satisfy ourselves concerning any determination which we may form with regard to the origin of worlds and the situation of nature from and to eternity?"—(IV. pp. 189—90.)

* Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Book I. chap i. §§. 4, 65.

But further, it is the business of criticism not only to keep watch over the vagaries of philosophy, but to do the duty of police in the whole world of thought. Whenever it espies sophistry or superstition they are to be bidden to stand; nay, they are to be followed to their very dens and there apprehended and exterminated, as Othello smothered Desdemona, "else she'll betray more men."

Hume warms into eloquence as he sets forth the labours meet for the strength and the courage of the Hercules of "mitigated scepticism."

"Here, indeed, lies the justest and most plausible objection against a considerable part of metaphysics, that they are not properly a science, but arise either from the fruitless efforts of human vanity, which would penetrate into subjects utterly inaccessible to the understanding, or from the craft of popular superstitions, which, being unable to defend themselves on fair ground, raise these entangling brambles to cover and protect their weakness. Chased from the open country, these robbers fly into the forest, and lie in wait to break in upon every unguarded avenue of the mind and overwhelmed it with religious fears and prejudices. The stoutest antagonist, if he remits his watch a moment, is oppressed; and many, through cowardice and folly, open the gates to the enemies, and willingly receive them with reverence and submission as their legal sovereigns.

"But is this a sufficient reason why philosophers should desist from such researches and leave superstition still in possession of her retreat? Is it not proper to draw an opposite conclusion, and perceive the necessity of carrying the war into the most secret recesses of the enemy? . . . . The only method of freeing learning at once from these abstruse questions is to inquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects. We must submit to this fatigue, in order to live at ease ever after; and must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, in order to destroy the false and adulterated."—(IV. 10, 11.)

Near a century and a half has elapsed since these brave words were shaped by David Hume's pen: and the business of carrying the war into the enemy's camp has gone on but slowly. Like other campaigns, it long languished for want of a good base of operations. But since physical science, in the course of the last fifty years, has brought to the front an inexhaustible supply of heavy artillery of a new pattern, warranted to drive solid bolts of fact through the thickest skulls, things are looking better; though hardly more than the first faint flutterings of the dawn of the happy day, when superstition and false metaphysics shall be no more and reasonable folks may "live at ease," are as yet discernible by the *enfants perdus* of the outposts.

If, in thus conceiving the object and the limitations of philosophy, Hume shows himself the spiritual child and continuator of the work of Locke, he appears no less plainly as the parent of Kant and as the protagonist of that more modern way of thinking, which has been called "agnosticism," from its profession of an incapacity

to discover the indispensable conditions of either postive or negative knowledge, in many propositions, respecting which not only the vulgar, but philosophers of the more sanguine sort, revel in the luxury of unqualified assurance.

The aim of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is essentially the same as that of the *Treatise of Human Nature*, by which, indeed, Kant was led to develop that " critical philosophy " with which his name and fame are indissolubly bound up: and, if the details of Kant's criticism differ from those Hume, they coincide with them in their main result, which is the limitation of all knowledge of reality to the world of phenomena revealed to us by experience.

The philosopher of Königsberg epitomises the philosopher of Ninewells when he thus sums up the uses of philosophy :—

"The greatest and perhaps the sole use of all philosophy of pure reason is, after all, merely negative, since it serves, not as an organon for the enlargement [of knowledge], but as a discipline for its delimitation; and instead of discovering truth, has only the modest merit of preventing error." *

* *Kritik der reinen Vernunft.* Ed. Hartenstein, p. 256.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTENTS OF THE MIND.

In the language of common life, the "mind" is spoken of as an entity, independent of the body, though resident in and closely connected with it, and endowed with numerous "faculties," such as sensibility, understanding, memory, volition, which stands in the same relation to the mind as the organs do to the body, and perform the functions of feeling, reasoning, remembering, and willing. Of these functions, some, such as sensation, are supposed to be merely passive— that is, they are called into existence by impressions made upon the sensitive faculty by a material world of real objects, of which our sensations are supposed to give us pictures; others, such as the memory and the reasoning faculty, are considered to be partly passive and partly active; while volition is held to be potentially, if not always actually, a spontaneous activity.

The popular classification and terminology of the phenomena of consciousness, however, are by no means the first crude conceptions suggested by common sense, but rather a legacy, and, in many respects, a sufficiently *damnosa hæreditas*, of ancient philosophy, more or less leavened by theology; which has incorporated itself with the common thought of later times, as the vices of the aristocracy of one age become those of the mob in the next. Very little attention to what passes in the mind is sufficient to show that these conceptions involve assumptions of an extremely hypothetical character. And the first business of the student of psychology is to get rid of such prepossessions; to form conceptions of mental phenomena as they are given us by observation, without any hypothetical admixture, or with only so much as is definitely recognised and held subject to confirmation or otherwise: to classify these phenomena according to their clearly recognisable characters; and to adopt a nomenclature which suggests nothing beyond the results of observation: Thus chastened, observation of the mind makes us acquainted with nothing but certain events, acts, or phenomena (whichever name be preferred) which pass over the inward field of view in rapid and, as it may appear on careless inspection, in disorderly succession, like the shifting patterns of a kaleidoscope. To all these mental phenomena, or state of our consciousness,*

* "Consciousnesses" would be a better name, but is awkward. I have elsewhere proposed *psychoses* as a substantive name for mental phenomena.

Descartes gave the name of "thoughts,"* while Locke and Berkeley termed the "ideas." Hume, regarding this as an improper use of the word "idea," for which he proposes another employment, gives the general name of "perceptions" to all states of consciousness. Thus, whatever other signification we may see reason to attach to the word "mind," it is certain that it is a name which is employed to denote a series of perceptions; just as the word "tune," whatever else it may mean, denotes, in the first place, a succession of musical notes. Hume, indeed, goes further than others when he says that—

"What we call a mind is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with a perfect simplicity and identity.—(I. p. 268.)

With this "nothing but," however, he obviously falls into the primal and perennial error of philosophical speculators—dogmatising from negative arguments. He may be right or wrong; but the most he, or anybody else, can prove in favor of his conclusion is, that we know nothing more of the mind than that it is a series of perceptions. Whether there is something in the mind that lies beyond the reach of observation; or whether perceptions themselves are the products of something which can be observed and which is not mind; are questions which can in nowise be settled by direct observation. Elsewhere, the objectionable hypothetical element of the definition of mind is less prominent:—

"The true idea of the human mind is to consider it as a system of different perceptions, or different existences, which are linked together by the relation of cause and effect, and mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other. . . . In this respect I cannot compare the soul mnre properly to anything than a republic or commonwealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons who propagate the same republic in the incessant changes of its parts."—(I. p. 331.)

But, leaving the question of the proper definition of mind open for the present, it is further a matter of direct observation that, when we take a general survey of all our perceptions or states of consciousness, they naturally fall into sundry groups or classes. Of these classes, two are distinguished by Hume as of primary importance. All "perceptions," he says, are either "*Impressions*" or "*Ideas*."

Under "impressions" he includes "all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, see, feel, love, or will;" in other words, "all

* As this has been denied, it may be as well to give Descartes's words: "Par le mot de penser, j'entends tout ce que se fait dans nous de telle sorte que nous l'apercevons immédiatement par nous-mêmes: c'est pourquoi non-seulement entendre, vouloir, imaginer, mais aussi sentir, c'est le même chose-ici que penser."—*Principes de Philosophie.* Ed. Cousin. 57.

"Toutes le propriétés que nous trouvons en la chose qui pense ne sout que des façons différentes de penser."—*Ibid.* 96.

our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearancein the soul."—(I. p. 15.)

"Ideas," on the other hand, are the faint images of impressions in thinking and reasoning, or of antecedent ideas.

Both impressions and ideas may be either *simple*, when they are incapable of further analysis, or *complex*, when they may be resolved into simpler constituents. All simple ideas are exact copies of impressions; but, in complex ideas, the arrangement of simple constituents may be different from that of the impressions of which those simple ideas are copies.

Thus the colours red and blue and the odour of a rose are simple impressions: while the ideas of blue, of red, and of rose-odour are simple copies of these impressions. But a red rose gives us a complex impression, capable of resolution into the simple impressions of red colour, rose-scent, and numerous others; and we may have a complex idea, which is an accurate, though faint, copy of this complex impression. Once in possession of the ideas of a red rose and of the colour blue, we may, in imagination, substitute blue for red; and thus obtain a complex idea of a blue rose, which is not an actual copy of any complex impression, though all its elements are such copies.

Hume has been criticised for making the distinction of impressions and ideas to depend upon their relative strength or vivacity. Yet it would be hard to point out any other character by which the things signified can be distinguished. Any one who has paid attention to the curious subject of what are called "subjective sensations" will be familiar with examples of the extreme difficulty which sometimes attends the discrimination of ideas of sensation from impressions of sensation, when the ideas are very vivid or the impressions are faint. Who has not "fancied" he heard a noise; or has not explained inattention to a real sound by saying, "I thought it was nothing but my fancy?" Even healthy persons are much more liable to both visual and auditory spectra—that is, ideas of vision and sound so vivid that they are taken for new impressions—than is commonly supposed; and, in some diseased states, ideas of sensible objects may assume all the vividness of reality.

If ideas are nothing but copies of impressions, arranged, either in the same order as that of the impressions from which they are derived, or in a different order, it follows that the ultimate analysis of the contents of the mind turns upon that of the impressions. According to Hume, these are of two kinds: either they are impressions of sensation, or they are impressions of reflection. The former are those afforded by the five senses, together with pleasure and pain. The latter are the passions or the emotions (which Hume employs as equivalent terms). Thus the elementary states of consciousness, the raw materials of knowledge, so to speak, are either sensations or emotions; and whatever we discover in the mind, beyond these elementary states of consciousness, results from the combinations and the metamorphoses which they undergo.

It is not a little strange that a thinker of Hume's capacity should

have been satisfied with the results of a psychological analysis which regards some obvious compounds as elements, while it omits altogether a most important class of elementary states.

With respect to the former point, Spinoza's masterly examination of the Passions in the third part of the *Ethics* should have been known to Hume.* But, if he had been acquainted with that wonderful piece of psychological anatomy, he would have learned that the emotions and passions are all complex states, arising from the close association of ideas of pleasure or pain with other ideas; and, indeed, without going to Spinoza, his own acute discussion of the passions leads to the same result,† and is wholly inconsistent with his classification of those mental states among the primary uncompounded materials of consciousness.

If Hume's "impressions of reflection" are excluded from among the primary elements of consciousness, nothing is left but impressions afforded by the five senses, with pleasure and pain. Putting aside the muscular sense, which had not come into view in Hume's time, the questions arise whether these are all the simple undecomposable materials of thought? or whether others exist of which Hume takes no cognizance.

Kant answered the latter question in the affirmative, in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, and thereby made one of the greatest advances ever effected in philosophy; though it must be confessed that the German philosopher's exposition of his views is so perplexed in style, so burdened with the weight of a cumbrous and uncouth scholasticism, that it is easy to confound the unessential parts of his system with those which are of profound importance. His baggage train is bigger than his army, and the student who attacks him is too often led to suspect he has won a position when he has only captured a mob of useless camp followers.

In his *Principles of Psychology*, Mr. Herbert Spencer appears to me to have brought out the essential truth which underlies Kant's doctrine in a far clearer manner than any one else; but, for the purpose of the present summary view of Hume's philosophy, it must suffice if I state the matter in my own way, giving the broad outlines, without entering into the details of a large and difficult discussion.

When a red light flashes across the field of vision, there arises in the mind an "impression of sensation"—which we call red. It appears to me that this sensation, red, is a something which may exist altogether independently of any other impression, or idea, as

* On the whole, it is pleasant to find satisfactory evidence that Hume knew nothing of the works of Spinoza; for the invariably abusive manner in which he refers to that type of the philosophic hero is only to be excused, if it is to be excused, by sheer ignorance of his life and work.

† For example, in discussing pride and humility, Hume says:—"According as our idea of ourselves is more or less advantageous, we feel either of these opposite affections, and are elated by pride or dejected with humility; . . . when self enters not into the consideration there is no room either for pride or humility." That is, pride is pleasure, and humility is pain, associated with certain conceptions of one's self; or, as Spinoza puts it:—"Superbia est de se præ amore sui plus justo sentire" ("amor" being "lætitia concomitante idea causæ externæ"); and "Humilitas est tristitia orta ex eo quod homo suam impotentiam sive imbecillitatem contemplatur."

an individual existence. It is perfectly conceivable that a sentient being should have no sense but vision, and that he should have spent his existence in absolute darkness, with the exception of one solitary flash of red light. That momentary illumination would suffice to give him the impression under consideration; and the whole content of his consciousness might be that impression; and, if he were endowed with memory, its idea.

Such being the state of affairs, suppose a second flash of red light to follow the first. If there were no memory of the latter, the state of the mind on the second occasion would simply be a repetition of that which occurred before. There would be merely another impression.

Bur suppose memory to exist, and that an idea of the first impression is generated; then, if the supposed sentient being were like ourselves, there might arise in his mind two altogether new impressions. The one is the feeling of the *succession* of the two impressions, the other is the feeling of their *similarity*.

Yet a third case is conceivable. Suppose two flashes of red light to occur together, then a third feeling might arise which is neither succession nor similarity, but that which we call *co-existence*.

These feelings, or their contraries, are the foundation of everything that we call a relation. They are no more capable of being described than sensations are; and, as it appears to me, they are as little susceptible of analysis into simpler elements. Like simple tastes and smells, or feelings of pleasure and pain, they are ultimate irresolvable facts of conscious experience; and, if we follow the principle of Hume's nomenclature, they must be called *impressions of relation*. But it must be remembered that they differ from the other impressions, in requiring the pre-existence of at least two of the latter. Though devoid of the slightest resemblance to the other impressions, they are, in a manner, generated by them. In fact, we may regard them as a kind of impressions; or as the sensations of an inner sense, which takes cognizance of the materials furnished to it by the outer senses.

Hume failed as completely as his predecessors had done to recognise the elementary character of impressions of relation; and, when he discusses relations, he falls into a chaos of confusion and self-contradiction.

In the *Treatise*, for example (Book I., § iv.), resemblance, contiguity in time and space, and cause and effect, are said to be the "uniting principles among ideas," "the bond of union" or associating quality by which one idea naturally introduces another." Hume affirms that—

"These qualities produce an association among ideas, and upon the appearance of one idea naturally introduce another." They are "the principles of union or cohesion among our simple ideas, and, in the imagination, supply the place of that inseparable connection by which they are united in our memory. Here is a kind of *attraction*, which, in the mental world, will be found to have as extraordinary effects as in the natural, and

to show itself in as many and as various forms. Its effects are everywhere conspicuous; but as to its causes they are mostly unknown, and must be resolved into *original* qualities of human nature, which I pretend not to explain."—(I. p. 29.)

And at the end of this section Hume goes on to say—

"Amongst the effects of this union or association of ideas, there are none more remarkable than those complex ideas which are the common subjects of ur thought and reasoning, and generally arise from some principle of union among our simple ideas. These complex ideas may be resolved into *relations*, *modes*, and *substances*."—(*Ibid.*)

In the next section, which is devoted to *Relations*, they are spoken of as qualities "by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination," or "which make objects admit of comparison," and seven kinds of relation are enumerated, namely *resemblance*, *identity*, *space and time*, *quantity or number*, *degrees of quality*, *contrariety*, and *cause and effect*

To the reader of Hume, whose conceptions are usually so clear, definite, and consistent, it is as unsatisfactory as it is surprising to meet with so much questionable and obscure phraseology in a small space. One and the same thing, for example, resemblance, is first called a "quality of an idea," and secondly, a "complex idea." Surely it cannot be both. Ideas which have the qualities of "resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect," are said to "attract one another" (save the mark!), and so become associated; though, in a subsequent part of the *Treatise*, Hume's great effort is to prove that the relation of cause and effect is a particular case of the process of association; that is to say, is a result of the process of which it is to be the cause. Moreover, since, as Hume is never weary of reminding his readers, there is nothing in ideas save copies of impressions, the qualities of resemblance, contiguity, and so on, in the idea, must have existed in the impression of which that idea is a copy; and therefore they must be either sensations or emotions—from both of which classes they are excluded.

In fact, in one place, Hume himself has an insight into the real nature of relations. Speaking of equality, in the sense of a relation of quantity, he says—

"Since equality is a relation, it is not, strictly speaking, a property in the figures themselves, but arises merely from the comparison which the mind makes between them."—(I. p. 70.)

That is to say, when two impressions of equal figures are present, there arises in the mind a *tertium quid*, which is the perception of equality. On his own principles, Hume should therefore have placed this "perception" among the ideas of reflection. However, as we have seen, he expressly excludes everything but the emotions and the passions from this group.

It is necessary, therefore, to amend Hume's primary "geography

of the mind" by the excision of one territory and the addition of another; and the elementary states of consciousness will stand thus:—

A. Impressions.
  A. Sensations of
    a. Smell.
    b. Taste.
    c. Hearing.
    d. Sight.
    e. Touch.
    f. Resistance (the muscular sense).
  B. Pleasure and Pain.
  C. Relations.
    a. Co-existence.
    b. Succession.
    c. Similarity and dissimilarity.
B. Ideas.
Copies, or reproductions in memory, of the foregoing.

And now the question arises, whether any, and if so, what, portion of these contents of the mind are to be termed "knowledge."

According to Locke, "Knowledge is the perception of the agreement or disagreement of two ideas;" and Hume, though he does not say so in so many words, tacitly accepts the definition. It follows that neither simple sensation, nor simple emotion, constitutes knowledge; but that, when impressions of relation are added to these impressions, or their ideas, knowledge arises: and that all knowledge is the knowledge of likenesses and unlikenesses, co-existences and successions.

It really matters very little in what sense terms are used, so long as the same meaning is always rigidly attached to them; and, therefore, it is hardly worth while to quarrel with this generally accepted, though very arbitrary, limitation of the signification of "Knowledge." But, on the face of the matter, it is not obvious why the impression we call a relation should have a better claim to the title of knowledge than that which we call a sensation or an emotion; and the restriction has this unfortunate result, that it excludes all the most intense states of consciousness from any claim to the title of "knowledge."

For example, on this view, pain, so violent and absorbing as to exclude all others forms of consciousness, is not knowledge; but becomes a part of knowledge the moment we think of it in relation to another pain, or to some other mental phenomenon. Surely this is somewhat inconvenient, for there is only a verbal difference between having a sensation and knowing one has it: they are simply two phrases for the same mental state.

But the "pure metaphysicians" make great capital out of the ambiguity. For, starting with the assumption that all knowledge is the perception of relations, and finding themselves, like mere common-sense folks, very much disposed to call sensation knowl-

edge, they at once gratify that disposition and save their consistency, by declaring that even the simplest act of sensation contains two terms and a relation—the sensitive subject, the sensigenous object, and that masterful entity, the Ego. From which great triad, as from a gnostic Trinity, emanates an endless procession of other logical shadows and all the *Fata Morgana* of philosophical dreamland.

CHAPTER III.

ORIGIN OF THE IMPRESSIONS.

ADMITTING that the sensations, the feelings of pleasure and pain, and those of relation, are the primary irresolvable states of consciousness, two further lines of investigation present themselves. The one leads us to seek the origin of these "impressions;" the other, to inquire into the nature of the steps by which they become metamorphosed into those compound states of consciousness which so largely enter into our ordinary trains of thought.

With respect to the origin of impressions of sensation, Hume is not quite consistent with himself. In one place (I. p. 117) he says that it is impossible to decide "whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or are derived from the Author of our being," thereby implying that realism and idealism are equally probable hypotheses. But, in fact, after the demonstration by Descartes, that the immediate antecedents of sensations are changes in the nervous system, with which our feelings have no sort of resemblance, the hypothesis that sensations "arise immediately from the object" was out of court; and that Hume fully admitted the Cartesian doctrine is apparent when he says (I. p. 272):—

> "All our perceptions are dependent on our organs and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits."

And again, though in relation to another question, he observes:—

> "There are three different kinds of impressions conveyed by the senses. The first are those of the figure, bulk, motion, and solidity of bodies. The second those of colours, tastes, smells, sounds, heat, and cold. The third are the pains and pleasures that arise from the application of objects to our bodies, as by the cutting of our flesh with steel and such like. Both philosophers and the vulgar suppose the first of these to have a distinct continued existence. The vulgar only regard the second as on the same footing. Both philosophers and the vulgar again esteem the third to be merely perceptions, and consequently interrupted and dependent beings.
>
> "Now 'tis evident that, whatever may be our philosophical opinion, colour, sounds, heat, and cold, as far as appears to the senses, exist after the same manner with motion and solidity; and that the difference we make between them, in this respect, arises not from the mere perception.

So strong is the prejudice for the distinct continued existence of the former qualities, that when the contrary opinion is advanced by modern philosophers, people imagine they can almost refute it from their reason and experience, and that their very senses contradict this philosophy. 'Tis also evident that colours, sounds, &c., are originally on the same footing with the pain that arises from steel, and pleasure that proceeds from a fire; and that the difference betwixt them is founded neither on perception nor reason, but on the imagination. For as they are confessed to be, both of them, nothing but perceptions arising from the particular configurations and motions of the parts of body, wherein possibly can their difference consist? Upon the whole, then, we may conclude that, as far as the senses are judges, all perceptions are the same in the manner of their existence."—(I. pp. 250, 251.)

The last words of this passage are as much Berkeley's as Hume's. But, instead of following Berkeley in his deductions from the position thus laid down, Hume, as the preceding citation shows, fully adopted the conclusion to which all that we know of psychological physiology tends, that the origin of the elements of consciousness, no less than that of all its other states, is to be sought in bodily changes, the seat of which can only be placed in the brain. And as Locke had already done with less effect, he states and refutes the arguments commonly brought against the possibility of a casual connexion between the modes of motion of the cerebral substance and states of consciousness, with great clearness:—

"From these hypotheses concerning the *substance* and *local conjunction* of our perceptions we may pass to another, which is more intelligible than the former, and more important than the latter, viz., concerning the *cause* of our perceptions. Matter and motion, 'tis commonly said in the schools, however varied, are still matter and motion, and produce only a difference in the position and situation of objects. Divide a body as often as you please, 'tis still body. Place it in any figure, nothing ever results but figure, or the relation of parts. Move it in any manner, you still find motion or a change of relation. 'Tis absurd to imagine that motion in a circle, for instance, should be nothing but merely motion in a circle; while motion in another direction, as in an ellipse, should also be a passion or moral reflection; that the shocking of two globular particles should become a sensation of pain, and that the meeting of the triangular ones should afford a pleasure. Now as these different shocks and variations and mixtures are the only changes of which matter is susceptible, and as these never afford us any idea of thought or perception, 'tis concluded to be impossible that thought can ever be caused by matter.

"Few have been able to withstand the seeming evidence of this argument; and yet nothing in the world is more easy than to refute it.—We need only reflect upon what has been proved at large, that we are never sensible of any connexion between causes and effects, and that 'tis only by our experience of their constant conjunction we can arrive at any knowledge of this relation. Now, as all objects which are not contrary are susceptible of a constant conjunction, and as no real objects are contrary, I have inferred from these principles (Part III. § 15) that, to consider the matter *a priori*, anything may produce anything, and that we shall never

discover a reason why any object may or may not be the cause of any other, however great, or however little, the resemblance may be betwixt them. This evidently destroys the precedent reasoning concerning the cause of thought or perception. For though there appear no manner of connection betwixt motion and thought, the case is the same with all other causes and effects. Place one body of a pound weight on one end of a lever, and another body of the same weight on the other end; you will never find in these bodies any principle of motion dependent on their distance from the centre, more than of thought, and preception. If you pretend therefore, to prove, *a priori*, that such a position of bodies can never cause thought, because, turn it which way you will, it is nothing but a position of bodies: you must, by the same course of reasoning, conclude that it can never produce motion, since there is no more apparent connection in the one than in the other. But, as this latter conclusion is contrary to evident experience, and as 'tis possible we may have a like experience in the operations of the mind, and may perceive a constant conjunction of thought and motion, you reason too hastily when, from the mere consideration of the ideas, you conclude that 'tis impossible motion can ever produce thought, or a different position of parts give rise to a different passion or reflection. Nay, 'tis not only possible we may have such an experience, but 'tis certain we have it; since every one may perceive that the different dispositions of his body change his thoughts and sentiments. And should it be said that this depends on the union of soul and body, I would answer, that we must separate the question concerning the substance of the mind from that concerning the cause of its thought; and that, confining ourselves to the latter question, we find, by the comparing their ideas, that thought and motion are different from each other, and by experience, that they are constantly united; which, being all the circumstances that enter into the idea of cause and effect, when applied to the operations of matter, we may certainly conclude that motion may be, and actually is, the cause of thought and perception."—(I. pp. 314—316.)

The upshot of all this is, that the "collection of perceptions," which constitutes the mind, is really a system of effects, the causes of which are to be sought in antecedent changes of the matter of the brain, just as the "collection of motions," which we call flying, is a system of effects, the causes of which are to be sought in the modes of motion of the matter of the muscles of the wings.

Hume, however, treats of this important topic only incidentally. He seems to have had very little acquaintance even with such physiology as was current in his time. At least, the only passage of his works bearing on this subject, with which I am acquainted, contains nothing but a very odd version of the physiological views of Descartes:

"When I received the relations of *resemblance*, *contiguity*, and *causation*, as principles of union among ideas, without examining into their causes, 'twas more in prosecution of my first maxim, that we must in the end rest contented with experience, than for want of something specious and plausible which I might have displayed on that subject. 'Twould have been easy to have made an imaginary dissection of the brain, and have shown why, upon our conception of any idea, the animal spirits run into all the contiguous traces and rouse up the other ideas that are related

to it. But though I have neglected any advantage which I might have drawn from this topic in explaining the relations of ideas, I am afraid I I must here have recourse to it, in order to account for the mistakes that arise from these relations. I shall therefore observe, that as the mind is endowed with the power of exciting any idea it pleases; whenever it despatches the spirits into that region of the brain in which the idea is placed; these spirits always excite the idea when they run precisely into the proper traces and rummage that cell which belongs to the idea. But as their motion is seldom direct, and naturally turns a little to the one side or to the other; for this reason the animal spirits, falling into the contiguous traces, present other related ideas, in lieu of that which the mind desired at first to survey. This change we are not always sensible of; but continuing still the same train of thought, make use of the related idea which is presented to us and employ it in our reasonings, as if it were the same with what we demanded. This is the cause of many mistakes and sophisms in philosophy, as will naturally be imagined, and as it would be easy to show, if there was occasion."—(I. p. 88.)

Perhaps it is as well for Hume's fame that the occasion for further physiological speculations of this sort did not arise. But, while admitting the crudity of his notions and the strangeness of the language in which they are couched, it must in justice be remembered, that what are now known as the elements of the physiology of the nervous system were hardly dreamed of in the first half of the eighteenth century; and, as a further set-off to Hume's credit, it must be noted that he grasped the fundamental truth, that the key to the comprehension of mental operations lies in the study of the molecular changes of the nervous apparatus by which they are originated.

Surely no one who is cognisant of the facts of the case, nowadays, doubts that the roots of psychology lie in the physiology of the nervous system. What we call the operations of the mind are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity. Cabanis may have made use of crude and misleading phraseology when he said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile; but the conception which that much-abused phrase embodies is, nevertheless, far more consistent with fact than the popular notion that the mind is a metaphysical entity seated in the head, but as independent of the brain as a telegraph operator is of his instrument.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the doctrine just laid down is what is commonly called materialism. In fact, I am not sure that the adjective "crass," which appears to have a special charm for rhetorical sciolists, would not be applied to it. But it is, nevertheless, true that the doctrine contains nothing inconsistent with the purest idealism. For, as Hume remarks (as indeed Descartes had observed long before):—

"'Tis not our body we perceive when we regard our limbs and members, but certain impressions which enter by the senses; so that the ascribing a real and corporeal existence to these impressions, or to their objects,

is an act of the mind as difficult to explain as that [the external existence of objects] which we examine at present."—(I. p. 249.)

Therefore, if we analyse the proposition that all mental phenomena are the effects or products of material phenomena, all that it means amounts to this; that whenever those states of consciousness which we call sensation, or emotion, or thought, come into existence, complete investigation will show good reason for the belief that they are preceded by those other phenomena of consciousness to which we give the names of matter and motion. All material changes appear, in the long run, to be modes of motion; but our knowledge of motion is nothing but that of a change in the place and order of our sensations; just as our knowledge of matter is restricted to those feelings of which we assume it to be the cause.

It has already been pointed out that Hume must have admitted, and in fact does admit, the possibility that the mind is a Leibnitzian monad, or a Fichtean world-generating Ego, the universe of things being merely the picture produced by the evolution of the phenomena of consciousness. For any demonstration that can be given to the contrary effect, the "collection of perceptions" which makes up our consciousness may be an orderly phantasmagoria generated by the Ego, unfolding its successive scenes on the background of the abyss of nothingness; as a firework, which is but cunningly arranged combustibles, grows from a spark into a coruscation, and from a coruscation into figures, and words, and cascades of devouring fire, and then vanishes into the darkness of the night.

On the other hand, it must no less readily be allowed that, for anything that can be proved to the contrary, there may be a real something which is the cause of all our impressions; that sensations, though not likenesses, are symbols of that something; and that the part of that something, which we call the nervous system, is an apparatus for supplying us with a sort of algebra of fact, based on those symbols. A brain may be the machinery by which the material universe becomes conscious of itself. But it is important to notice that, even if this conception of the universe and of the relation of consciousness to its other components should be true, we should, nevertheless, be still bound by the limits of thought, still unable to refute the arguments of pure idealism. The more completely the materialistic position is admitted, the easier it is to show that the idealistic position is unassailable, if the idealist confines himself within the limits of positive knowledge.

Hume deals with the questions whether all our ideas are derived from experience, or whether, on the contrary, more or fewer of them are innate, which so much exercised the mind of Locke, after a somewhat summary fashion, in a note to the second section of the *Inquiry*:—

"It is probable that no more was meant by those who denied innate ideas, than that all ideas were copies of our impressions; though it must

be confessed that the terms which they employed were not chosen with such caution, nor so exactly defined, as to prevent all mistakes about their doctrine. For what is meant by *innate?* If innate be equivalent to natural, then all the perceptions and ideas of the mind must be allowed to be innate or natural, in whatever sense we take the latter word, whether in opposition to what is uncommon, artificial, or miraculous. If by innate be meant contemporary with our birth, the dispute seems to be frivolous; nor is it worth while to inquire at what time thinking begins, whether before, at, or after our birth. Again, the word *idea* seems to be commonly taken in a very loose sense by Locke and others, as standing for any of our perceptions, our sensations and passions, as well as thoughts. Now in this sense I should desire to know what can be meant by asserting that self-love, or resentment of injuries, or the passion between the sexes is not innate?

"But admitting these terms, *impressions* and *ideas*, in the sense above explained, and understanding by *innate* what is original or copied from no precedent perception, then we may assert that all our impressions are innate, and our ideas not innate."

It would seem that Hume did not think it worth while to acquire a comprehension of the real points at issue in the controversy which he thus carelessly dismisses.

Yet Descartes has defined what he means by innate ideas with so much precision, that misconception ought to have been impossible. He says that, when he speaks of an idea being "innate," he means that it exists potentially in the mind, before it is actually called into existence by whatever is its appropriate exciting cause.

"I have never either thought or said," he writes, "that the mind has any need of innate ideas [*idées naturelles*] which are anything distinct from its faculty of thinking. But it is true that observing that there are certain thoughts which arise neither from external objects nor from the determination of my will, but only from my faculty of thinking; in order to mark the difference between the ideas or the notions which are the forms of these thoughts, and to distinguish them from the others, which may be called extraneous or voluntary, I have called them innate. But I have used this term in the same sense as when we say that generosity is innate in certain families; or that certain maladies, such as gout or gravel, are innate in others: not that children born in these families are troubled with such diseases in their mother's womb, but because they are born with the disposition or the faculty of contracting them." *

His troublesome disciple, Regius, having asserted that all our ideas come from observation or tradition, Descartes remarks:—

"So thoroughly erroneous is this assertion, that whoever has a proper comprehension of the action of our senses, and understands precisely the nature of that which is transmitted by them to our thinking faculty, will rather affirm that no ideas of things, such as are formed in thought, are brought to us by the senses, so that there is nothing in our ideas which is other than innate in the mind (*naturel à l'esprit*), or in the faculty of think-

* Remarques de René Descartes sur un certain placard imprimé aux Pays Bas vers la fin de l'année, 1647.—Descartes, *Œuvres*. Ed. Cousin, x. p. 71.

ing, if only certain circumstances are excepted, which belong only to experience. For example, it is experience alone which causes us to judge that such and such ideas, now present in our minds, are related to certain things which are external to us; not in truth, that they have been sent into our mind by these things, such as they are, by the organs of the senses; but because these organs have transmitted something which has occasioned the mind, in virtue of its innate power, to form them at this time rather than at another. . . .

"Nothing passes from external objects to the soul except certain motions of matter (*mouvemens corporels*), but neither these motions, nor the figures which they produce, are conceived by us as they exist in the sensory organs, as I have fully explained in my 'Dioptrics;' whence it follows that even the ideas of motion and of figures are innate (*naturellement en nous*). And, *à fortiori*, the ideas of pain, of colours, of sounds, and of all similar things must be innate, in order that the mind may represent them to itself, on the occasion of certain motions of matter with which they have no resemblance."

Whoever denies what is, in fact, an inconceivable proposition, that sensations pass, as such, from the external world into the mind, must admit the conclusion here laid down by Descartes, that, strictly speaking, sensations, and, *à fortiori*, all the other contents of the mind, are innate. Or, to state the matter in accordance with the views previously expounded, that they are products of the inherent properties of the thinking organ, in which they lie potentially, before they are called into existence by their appropriate causes.

But if all the contents of the mind are innate, what is meant by experience?

It is the conversion, by unknown causes, of these innate potentialities into actual existences. The organ of thought, prior to experience, may be compared to an untouched piano, in which it may be properly said that music is innate, inasmuch as its mechanism contains, potentially, so many octaves of musical notes. The unknown cause of sensation which Descartes calls the "je ne sais quoi dans les objets" or "choses telles qu'elles sont;" and Kant the "Noumenon" or "Ding an sich;" is represented by the musician, who, by touching the keys, converts the potentiality of the mechanism into actual sounds. A note so produced is the equivalent of a single experience.

All the melodies and harmonies that proceed from the piano depend upon the action of the musician upon the keys. There is no internal mechanism which, when certain keys are struck, gives rise to an accompaniment of which the musician is only indirectly the cause. According to Descartes, however—and this is what is generally fixed upon as the essence of his doctrine of innate ideas—the mind possesses such an internal mechanism, by which certain classes of thoughts are generated, on the occasion of certain experiences. Such thoughts are innate, just as sensations are innate; they are not copies of sensations, any more than sensations are copies of motions; they are invariably generated in the mind, when certain experiences arise in it, just as sensations are invariably gen-

erated when certain bodily motions take place; they are universal, inasmuch as they arise under the same conditions in all men; they are necessary, because their genesis under these conditions is invariable. These innate thoughts are what Descartes terms "vérités" or truths; that is, beliefs—and his notions respecting them are plainly set forth in a passage of the *Principes.*

"Thus far I have discussed that which we know as things: it remains that I should speak of that which we know as truths. For example, when we think that it is impossible to make anything out of nothing, we do not imagine that this proposition is a thing which exists, or a property of something, but we take it for a certain eternal truth, which has its seat in the mind (*pensée*), and is called a common notion or an axiom. Similarly, when we affirm that it is impossible that one and the same thing should exist and not exist at the same time; that that which has been created should not have been created; that he who thinks must exist while he thinks; and a number of other like propositions—these are only truths, and not things which exist outside our thoughts. And there is such a number of these that it would be wearisome to enumerate them: nor is it necessary to do so, because we cannot fail to know them when the occasion of thinking about them presents itself, and we are not blinded by any prejudices."

It would appear that Locke was not more familiar with Descartes' writings than Hume seems to have been; for, viewed in relation to the passages just cited, the arguments adduced in his famous polemic against innate ideas are totally irrelevant.

It has been shown that Hume practically, if not in so many words, admits the justice of Descartes' assertion that, strictly speaking, sensations are innate; that is to say, that they are the product of the reaction of the organ of the mind on the stimulus of an "unknown cause," which is Descartes' "je ne sais quoi." Therefore, the difference between Descartes' opinion and that of Hume resolves itself into this: Given sensation-experiences, can all the contents of consciousness be derived from the collocation and metamorphosis of these experiences? Or, are new elements of conciousness, products of an innate potentiality distinct from sensibility, added to these? Hume affirms the former position, Descartes the latter. If the analysis of the phenomena of consciousness given in the preceding pages is correct, Hume is in error; while the father of modern philosophy had a truer insight, though he overstated the case. For want of sufficiently searching psychological investigations, Descartes was led to suppose that innumerable ideas, the evolution of which in the course of experience can be demonstrated, were direct or innate products of the thinking faculty.

As has been already pointed out, it is the great merit of Kant that he started afresh on the track indicated by Descartes, and steadily upheld the doctrine of the existence of elements of consciousness, which are neither sense-experiences nor any modification of them. We may demur to the expression that space and

time are forms of sensory intuition; but it imperfectly represents the great fact that co-existence and succession are mental phenomena not given in the mere sense-experience.*

* "Wir können uns Gegenstand denken, ohne durch Kategorien; wir können keinen gedachten Gegenstand erkennen, ohne durch Anschauungen, die jenen Begriffen entsprechen. Nun sind alle unsere Anschauungen sinnlich, und diese Erkenntniss, so fern der Gegenstand derselben gegeben ist, ist empirisch. Empirische, Erkenntniss aber ist Erfahrung. Folglich ist uns keine Erkenntniss *a priori* möglich, als lediglich von Gegenständen möglicher Erfahrung.

"Aber, diese Erkenntniss, die bloss auf Gegenstände der Erfahrung eingeschränkt ist, ist darum nicht alle von der Erfahrung entlehnt, sondern was sowohl, die reinen Anschauungen, als die reinen Verstandesbegriffe betrifft, so sind sie Elemente der Erkenntniss die in uns *a priori* angetroffen werden."—*Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Elementarlehre*, p. 135.

Without a glossary explanatory of Kant's terminology, this passage would be hardly intelligible in a translation; but it may be paraphrased thus: All knowledge is founded upon experience of sensation, but it is not all derived from those experiences; inasmuch as the impressions of relation ("reine Anschauungen;" "reine Verstandesbegriffe") have a potential or *a priori* existence in us, and by their addition to sense-experiences, constitute knowledge.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CLASSIFICATION AND THE NOMENCLATURE OF MENTAL OPERATIONS.

If, as has been set forth in the preceding chapter, all mental states are effects of physical causes, it follows that what are called mental faculties and operations are, properly speaking, cerebral functions, allotted to definite, though not yet precisely assignable, parts of the brain.

These functions appear to be reducible to three groups, namely: Sensation, Correlation, and Ideation.

The organs of the functions of sensation and correlation are those portions of the cerebral substance, the molecular changes of which give rise to impressions of sensation and impressions of relation.

The changes in the nervous matter which bring about the effects which we call its functions, follow upon some kind of stimulus, and rapidly reaching their maximum, as rapidly die away. The effect of the irritation of a nerve-fibre on the cerebral substance with which it is connected may be compared to the pulling of a long bell-wire. The impulse takes a little time to reach the bell; the bell rings and then becomes quiescent, until another pull is given. So, in the brain, every sensation is the ring of a cerebral particle, the effect of a momentary impulse sent along a nerve-fibre.

If there were a complete likeness between the two terms of this very rough and ready comparison, it is obvious that there could be no such thing as memory. A bell records no audible sign of having been rung five minutes ago, and the activity of a sensigenous cerebral particle might similarly leave no trace. Under these circumstances, again, it would seem that the only impressions of relation which could arise would be those of co-existence and of similarity. For succession implies memory of an antecedent state.*

But the special peculiarity of the cerebral apparatus is, that any given function which has once been performed is very easily set a-going again, by causes more or less different from those to which

* It is not worth while, for the present purpose, to consider whether, as all nervous action occupies a sensible time, the duration of one impression might not overlap that of the impression which follows it, in the case supposed.

it owed its origin. Of the mechanism of this generation of images of impressions or ideas (in Hume's sense), which may be termed *Ideation*, we know nothing at present, though the fact and its results are familiar enough.

During our waking, and many of our sleeping, hours, in fact, the function of ideation is in continual, if not continuous, activity. Trains of thought, as we call them, succeed one another without intermission, even when the starting of new trains by fresh sense-impressions is as far as possible prevented. The rapidity and the intensity of this ideational process are obviously dependent upon physiological conditions. The widest differences in these respects are constitutional in men of different temperaments; and are observable in oneself, under varying conditions of hunger and repletion, fatigue and freshness, calmness and emotional excitement. The influence of diet on dreams; of stimulants upon the fulness and the velocity of the stream of thought; the delirious phantasms generated by disease, by hashish, or by alcohol—will occur to every one as examples of the marvellous sensitiveness of the apparatus of ideation to purely physical influences.

The succession of mental states in ideation is not fortuitous, but follows the law of association, which may be stated thus: that every idea tends to be followed by some other idea which is associated with the first, or its impression, by a relation of succession, of contiguity, or of likeness.

Thus the idea of the word horse just now presented itself to my mind, and was followed in quick succession by the ideas of four legs, hoofs, teeth, rider, saddle, racing, cheating; all of which ideas are connected in my experience with the impression, or the idea, of a horse and with one another, by the relations of contiguity and succession. No great attention to what passes in the mind is needful to prove that our trains of thought are neither to be arrested, nor even permanently controlled, by our desires or emotions. Nevertheless they are largely influenced by them. In the presence of a strong desire, or emotion, the stream of thought no longer flows on in a straight course, but seems, as it were, to eddy round the idea of that which is the object of the emotion. Every one who has "eaten his bread in sorrow" knows how strangely the current of ideas whirls about the conception of the object of regret or remorse as a centre; every now and then, indeed, breaking away into the new tracks suggested by passing associations, but still returning to the central thought. Few can have been so happy as to have escaped the social bore, whose pet notion is certain to crop up whatever topic is started; while the fixed idea of the monomaniac is but the extreme form of the same phenomenon.

And as, on the one hand, it is so hard to drive away the thought we would fain be rid of; so, upon the other, the pleasant imaginations which we would so gladly retain are, sooner or later, jostled away by the crowd of claimants for birth into the world of consciousness; which hover as a sort of psychical possibilities, or inverse ghosts, the bodily presentments of spiritual phenomena to

be, in the limbo of the brain. In that form of desire which is called "attention," the train of thought, held fast, for a time, in the desired direction, seems ever striving to get on to another line —and the junctions and sidings are so multitudinous!

The constituents of trains of ideas may be grouped in various ways.

Hume says:—

"We find, by experience, that when any impression has been present in the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea, and this it may do in two different ways: either when, on its new appearance, it retains a considerable degree of its first vivacity, and is somewhat intermediate between an impression and an idea; or when it entirely loses that vivacity, and is a perfect idea. The faculty by which we repeat our impressions in the first manner is called the *memory*, and the other the *imagination*."—(I. p. 23, 24.)

And he considers that the only difference between ideas of imagination and those of memory, except the superior vivacity of the latter, lies in the fact that those of memory preserve the original order of the impressions from which they are derived, while the imagination "is free to transpose and change its ideas."

The latter statement of the difference between memory and imagination is less open to cavil than the former, though by no means unassailable.

The special characteristic of a memory, surely, is not its vividness; but that it is a complex idea, in which the idea of that which is remembered is related by co-existence with other ideas, and by antecedence with present impressions.

If I say I remember A. B., the chance acquaintance of ten years ago, it is not because my idea of A. B. is very vivid—on the contrary, it is extremely faint—but because that idea is associated with ideas of impressions co-existent with those which I call A. B.; and that all these are at the end of the long series of ideas, which represent that much past time. In truth, I have a much more vivid idea of Mr. Pickwick, or of Colonel Newcome, than I have of A. B.; but, associated with the ideas of these persons, I have no idea of their having ever been derived from the world of impressions; and and so they are relegated to the world of imagination. On the the other hand, the characteristic of an imagination may properly be said to lie not in its intensity, but in the fact that, as Hume puts it, "the arrangement," or the relations, of the ideas are different from those in which the impressions, whence these ideas are derived, occurred; or, in other words, that the thing imagined has not happened. In popular usage, however, imagination is frequently employed for simple memory—"In imagination I was back in the old times."

It is a curious omission on Hume's part that, while thus dwelling on two classes of ideas, *Memories* and *Imaginations*, he has not, at the same time, taken notice of a third group, of no small

importance, which are as different from imaginations as memories are ; though, like the latter, they are often confounded with pure imaginations in general speech. These are the ideas of expectation, or, as they may be called for the sake of brevity, *Expectations;* which differ from simple imaginations in being associated with the idea of the existence of corresponding impressions, in the future, just as memories contain the idea of the existence of the corresponding impressions in the past.

The ideas belonging to two of the three groups enumerated: namely, memories and expectations, present some features of particular interest. And first, with respect to memories.

In Hume's words, all simple ideas are copies of simple impressions. The idea of a single sensation is a faint, but accurate, image of that sensation; the idea of a relation is a reproduction of the feeling of co-existence, of succession, or of similarity. But, when complex impressions or complex ideas are reproduced as memories, it is probable that the copies never give all the details of the originals with perfect accuracy, and it is certain that they rarely do so. No one possesses a memory so good, that if he has only once observed a natural object, a second inspection does not show him something that he has forgotten. Almost all, if not all, our memories are therefore sketches, rather than portraits, of the originals—the salient features are obvious, while the subordinate characters are obscure or unrepresented.

Now, when several complex impressions which are more or less different from one another—let us say that out of ten impressions in each, six are the same in all, and four are different from all the rest—are successively presented to the mind, it is easy to see what must be the nature of the result. The repetition of the six similar impressions will strengthen the six corresponding elements of the complex idea, which will therefore acquire greater vividness ; while the four differing impressions of each will not only acquire no greater strength than they had at first, but, in accordance with the law of association, they will all tend to appear at once, and will thus neutralise one another.

This mental operation may be rendered comprehensible by considering what takes place in the formation of compound photographs —when the images of the faces of six sitters, for example, are each received on the same photographic plate, for a sixth of the time requisite to take one portrait. The final result is that all those points in which the six faces agree are brought out strongly, while all those in which they differ are left vague ; and thus what may be termed a *generic* portrait of the six, in contradistinction to a *specific* portrait of any one, is produced.

Thus our ideas of single complex impressions are incomplete in one way, and those of numerous, more or less similar. complex impressions are incomplete in another way ; that is to say, they are *generic*, not *specific*. And hence it follows that our ideas of the impressions in question are not, in the strict sense of the word, copies of those impressions ; while, at the same time, they may exist in the mind independently of language.

The generic ideas which are formed from several similar, but not identical, complex experiences are what are commonly called *abstract* or *general* ideas; and Berkeley endeavoured to prove that all general ideas are nothing but particular ideas annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall, upon occasion, other individuals which are similar to them. Hume says that he regards this as "one of the greatest and the most valuable discoveries that has been made of late years in the republic of letters," and endeavours to confirm it in such a manner that it shall be "put beyond all doubt and controversy."

I may venture to express a doubt whether he has succeeded in his object; but the subject is an abstruse one; and I must content myself with the remark, that though Berkeley's view appears to be largely applicable to such general ideas as are formed after language has been acquired, and to all the more abstract sort of conceptions, yet that general ideas of sensible objects may nevertheless be produced in the way indicated, and may exist independently of language. In dreams, one sees houses, trees, and other objects, which are perfectly recognisable as such, but which remind one of the actual objects as seen "out of the corner of the eye," or of the pictures thrown by a badly-focussed magic lantern. A man addresses us who is like a figure seen by twilight; or we travel through countries where every feature of the scenery is vague; the outlines of the hills are ill-marked, and the rivers have no defined banks. They are, in short, generic ideas of many past impressions of men, hills, and rivers. An anatomist who occupies himself intently with the examination of several specimens of some new kind of animal, in course of time acquires so vivid a conception of its form and structure, that the idea may take visible shape and become a sort of waking dream. But the figure which thus presents itself is generic, not specific. It is no copy of any one specimen, but, more or less, a mean of the series; and there seems no reason to doubt that the minds of children before they learn to speak, and of deaf-mutes, are peopled with similarly generated generic ideas of sensible objects.

It has been seen that a memory is a complex idea made up of at least two constituents. In the first place, there is the idea of an object; and, secondly, there is the idea of the relation of antecedence between that object and some present objects.

To say that one has a recollection of a given event and to express the belief that it happened, are two ways of giving an account of one and the same mental fact. But the former mode of stating the fact of memory is preferable, at present, because it certainly does not presuppose the existence of language in the mind of the rememberer; while it may be said that the latter does. It is perfectly possible to have the idea of an event A, and of the events B, C, D, which came between it and the present state E, as mere mental pictures. It is hardly to be doubted that children have very distinct memories long before they can speak; and we believe

that such is the case because they act upon their memories. But, if they act upon their memories, they to all intents and purposes believe their memories. In other words, though, being devoid of language, the child cannot frame a proposition expressive of belief; cannot say "sugar-plum was sweet;" yet the psychical operation of which that proposition is merely the verbal expression is perfectly effected. The experience of the co-existence of sweetness with sugar has produced a state of mind which bears the same relation to a verbal proposition as the natural disposition to produce a given idea, assumed to exist by Descartes as an "innate idea" would bear to that idea put into words.

The fact that the beliefs of memory precede the use of language, and therefore are originally purely instinctive, and independent of any rational justification, should have been of great importance to Hume, from its bearing upon his theory of causation; and it is curious that he has not adverted to it, but always takes the trustworthiness of memories for granted. It may be worth while briefly to make good the omission.

That I was in pain, yesterday, is as certain to me as any matter of fact can be; by no effort of the imagination is it possible for me really to entertain the contrary belief. At the same time, I am bound to admit that the whole foundation for my belief is the fact that the idea of pain is indissolubly associated in my mind with the idea of that much past time. Any one who will be at the trouble may provide himself with hundreds of examples to the same effect.

This and similar observations are important under another aspect. They prove that the idea of even a single strong impression may be so powerfully associated with that of a certain time, as to originate a belief of which the contrary is inconceivable, and which may therefore be properly said to be necessary. A single weak, or moderately strong, impression may not be represented by any memory. But this defect of weak experiences may be compensated by their repetition; and what Hume means by "custom" or "habit" is simply the repetition of experiences—

"wherever the repetition of any particular act or operation produces a propensity to renew the same act or operation, without being impelled by any reasoning or process of the understanding, we always say that this propensity is the effect of *custom*. By employing that word, we pretend not to have given the ultimate reason of such a propensity. We only point out a principle of human nature which is universally acknowledged, and which is well known by its effects."—(IV. p. 52.)

It has been shown that an expectation is a complex idea which, like a memory, is made up of two constituents. The one is the idea of an object, the other is the idea of a relation of sequence between that object and some present object; and the reasoning which applied to memories applies to expectations. To have an expectation* of a given event, and to believe that it will happen,

* We give no name to faint memories; but expectations of like character play so large a part in human affairs that they, together with the associated emotions of pleasure and pain, are distinguished as "hopes" or "fears."

are only two modes of stating the same fact. Again, just in the same way as we call a memory, put into words, a belief, so we give the same name to an expectation in like clothing. And the fact already cited, that a child before it can speak acts upon its memories, is good evidence that it forms expectations. The infant who knows the meaning neither of "sugar-plum" nor of "sweet," nevertheless is in full possession of that complex idea, which, when he has learned to employ language, will take the form of the verbal proposition, "A sugar-plum will be sweet."

Thus, beliefs of expectation, or at any rate their potentialities, are, as much as those of memory, antecedent to speech, and are as incapable of justification by any logical process. In fact, expectations are but memories inverted. The association which is the foundation of expectation must exist as a memory before it can play its part. As Hume says,—

". . . it is certain we here advance a very intelligible proposition at least, if not a true one, when we assert that after the constant conjunction of two objects, heat and flame, for instance, weight and solidity, we are determined by custom alone to expect the one from the appearance of the other. This hypothesis, seems even the only one which explains the difficulty why we draw from a thousand instances, an inference which we are not able to draw from one instance, that is in no respect different from them." . . .

"Custom, then, is the great guide of human life. It is that principle alone which renders our experience useful to us, and makes us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past." . . .

"All belief of matter-of-fact or real-existence is derived merely from some object present to the memory or senses, and a customary conjunction between that and some other object; or, in other words, having found, in many instances, that any two kinds of objects, flame and heat, snow and cold, have always been subjoined together: if flame or snow be presented anew to the senses, the mind is carried by custom to expect heat or cold, and to *believe* that such a quality does exist, and will discover itself upon a nearer approach. This belief is the necessary result of placing the mind in such circumstances. It is an operation of the soul, when we are so situated, as unavoidable as to feel the passion of love when we receive benefits, or hatred when we meet with injuries. All these operations are a species of natural instincts, which no reasoning or process of the thought and understanding is able either to produce or to prevent."—(IV. pp. 52—56.)

The only comment that appears needful here is, that Hume has attached somewhat too exclusive a weight to that repetition of experiences to which alone the term "custom" can be properly applied. The proverb says that "a burnt child dreads the fire;" and any one who will make the experiment will find that one burning is quite sufficient to establish an indissoluble belief that contact with fire and pain go together.

As a sort of inverted memory, expectation follows the same laws; hence, while a belief of expectation is, in most cases, as Hume truly says, established by custom, or the repetition of weak

impressions, it may quite well be based upon a single strong experience. In the absence of language, a specific memory cannot be strengthened by repetition. It is obvious that that which has happened cannot happen again, with the same collateral associations of co-existence and succession. But memories of the co-existence and succession of impressions are capable of being indefinitely strengthened by the recurrence of similar impressions, in the same order, even though the collateral associations are totally different; in fact, the ideas of these impressions become generic.

If I recollect that a piece of ice was cold yesterday, nothing can strengthen the recollection of that particular fact; on the contrary, it may grow weaker, in the absence of any record of it. But if I touch ice to-day and again find it cold, the association is repeated, and the memory of it becomes stronger. And, by this very simple process of repetition of experience, it has become utterly impossible for us to think of having handled ice without thinking of its coldness. But, that which is, under the one aspect, the strengthening of a memory, is, under the other, the intensification of an expectation. Not only can we not think of having touched ice without feeling cold, but we cannot think of touching ice in the future without expecting to feel cold. An expectation so strong that it cannot be changed, or abolished, may thus be generated out of repeated experiences. And it is important to note that such expectations may be formed quite unconsciously. In my dressing-room, a certain can is usually kept full of water, and I am in the habit of lifting it to pour out water for washing. Sometimes the servant has forgotten to fill it, and then I find that, when I take hold of the handle, the can goes up with a jerk. Long association has, in fact, led me to expect the can to have a considerable weight; and, quite unawares, my muscular effort is adjusted to the expectation.

The process of strengthening generic memories of succession, and, at the same time, intensifying expectations of succession, is what is commonly called *verification.* The impression B has frequently been observed to follow the impression A. The association thus produced is represented as the memory, $A \rightarrow B$. When the impression A appears again, the idea of B follows, associated with that of the immediate appearance of the impression B. If the impression B does appear, the expectation is said to be verified; while the memory $A \rightarrow B$ is strengthened, and gives rise in turn to a stronger expectation. And repeated verification may render that expectation so strong that its non-verification is inconceivable.

CHAPTER V.

MENTAL PHENOMENA OF ANIMALS.

In the course of the preceding chapters attention has been more than once called to the fact, that the elements of consciousness and the operations of the mental faculties, under discussion, exist independently of, and antecedent to, the existence of language.

If any weight is to be attached to arguments from analogy, there is overwhelming evidence in favour of the belief that children, before they can speak, and deaf-mutes, possess the feelings to which those who have acquired the faculty of speech apply the name of sensations; that they have the feelings of relation; that trains of ideas pass through their minds; that generic ideas are formed from specific ones; and that among these ideas of memory and expectation occupy a most important place, inasmuch as, in their quality of potential beliefs, they furnish the grounds of action. This conclusion, in truth, is one of those which, though they cannot be demonstrated, are never doubted; and, since it is highly probable and cannot be disproved, we are quite safe in accepting it as, at any rate, a good working hypothesis.

But, if we accept it, we must extend it to a much wider assemblage of living beings. Whatever cogency is attached to the arguments in favour of the occurrence of all the fundamental phenomena of mind in young children and deaf-mutes, an equal force must be allowed to appertain to those which may be adduced to prove that the higher animals have minds. We must admit that Hume does not express himself too strongly when he says—

"no truth appears to me more evident than that the beasts are endowed with thought and reason as well as men. The arguments are in this case so obvious, that they never escape the most stupid and ignorant." —(I. p. 232.)

In fact, this is one of the few cases in which the conviction which forces itself upon the stupid and the ignorant, is fortified by the reasonings of the intelligent, and has its foundation deepened by every increase of knowledge. It is not merely that the observation of the actions of animals almost irresistibly suggests the attribution to them of mental states, such as those which accompany

corresponding actions in men. The minute comparison which has been instituted by anatomists and physiologists between the organs which we know to constitute the apparatus of thought in man, and the corresponding organs in brutes, has demonstrated the existence of the closest similarity between the two, not only in structure, as far as the microscope will carry us, but in function, as far as functions are determinable by experiment. There is no question in the mind of any one acquainted with the facts that, so far as observation and experiment can take us, the structure and the functions of the nervous system are fundamentally the same in an ape, or in a dog, and in a man. And the suggestion that we must stop at the exact point at which direct proof fails us; and refuse to believe that the similarity which extends so far stretches yet further, is no better than a quibble. Robinson Crusoe did not feel bound to conclude, from the single human footprint which he saw in the sand, that the maker of the impression had only one leg.

Structure for structure, down to the minutest microscopical details, the eye, the ear, the olfactory organs, the nerves, the spinal cord, the brain of an ape, or of a dog, correspond with the same organs in the human subject. Cut a nerve, and the evidence of paralysis, or of insensibility, is the same in the two cases; apply pressure to the brain, or administer a narcotic, and the signs of intelligence disappear in the one as in the other. Whatever reason we have for believing that the changes which take place in the normal cerebral substance of man give rise to states of consciousness, the same reason exists for the belief that the modes of motion of the cerebral substance of an ape, or of a dog, produce like effects.

A dog acts as if he had all the different kinds of impressions of sensation of which each of us is cognisant. Moreover, he governs his movements exactly as if he had the feelings of distance, form, succession, likeness, and unlikeness, with which we are familiar, or as if the impressions of relation were generated in his mind as they are in our own. Sleeping dogs frequently appear to dream. If they do, it must be admitted that ideation goes on in them while they are asleep; and, in that case, there is no reason to doubt that they are conscious of trains of ideas in their waking state. Further, that dogs, if they possess ideas at all, have memories and expectations, and those potential beliefs of which these states are the foundation, can hardly be doubted by any one who is conversant with their ways. Finally, there would appear to be no valid argument against the supposition that dogs form generic ideas of sensible objects. One of the most curious peculiarities of the dog mind is its inherent snobbishness, shown by the regard paid to external respectability. The dog who barks furiously at a beggar will let a well-dressed man pass him without opposition. Has he not then a "generic idea" of rags and dirt associated with the idea of aversion, and that of sleek broadcloth associated with the idea of liking?

In short, it seems hard to assign any good reason for denying

to the higher animals any mental state, or process, in which the employment of the vocal or visual symbols of which language is composed is not involved; and comparative psychology confirms the position in relation to the rest of the animal world assigned to man by comparative anatomy. As comparative anatomy is easily able to show that, physically, man is but the last term of a long series of forms, which lead, by slow gradations, from the highest mammal to the almost formless speck of living protoplasm, which lies on the shadowy boundary between animal and vegetable life; so, comparative psychology, though but a young science, and far short of her elder sister's growth, points to the same conclusion.

In the absence of a distinct nervous system, we have no right to look for its product, consciousness: and, even in those forms of animal life in which the nervous apparatus has reached no higher degree of development than that exhibited by the system of the spinal cord and the foundation of the brain in ourselves, the argument from analogy leaves the assumption of the existence of any form of consciousness unsupported. With the superaddition of a nervous apparatus corresponding with the cerebrum in ourselves, it is allowable to suppose the appearance of the simplest states of consciousness, or the sensations; and it is conceivable that these may at first exist, without any power of reproducing them, as memories; and, consequently, without ideation. Still higher, an apparatus of correlation may be superadded, until, as all these organs become more developed, the condition of the highest speechless animals is attained.

It is a remarkable example of Hume's sagacity that he perceived the importance of a branch of science which, even now, can hardly be said to exist; and that, in a remarkable passage, he sketches in bold outlines the chief featurs of comparative psychology.

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". . . any theory, by which we explain the operations of the understanding, or the origin and connexion of the passions in man, will acquire additional authority if we find that the same theory is requisite to explain the same phenomena in all other animals. We shall make trial of this with regard to the hypothesis by which we have, in the foregoing discourse, endeavoured to account for all experimental reasonings; and it is hoped that this new point of view will serve to confirm all our former observations.

"*First*, it seems evident that animals, as well as men, learn many things from experience, and infer that the same events will always follow from the same causes. By this principle they become acquainted with the more obvious properties of external objects, and gradually, from their birth treasure up a knowledge of the nature of fire, water, earth, stones, heights, depths, &c., and of the effects which result from their operation. The ignorance and inexperience of the young are here plainly distinguish-

able from the cunning and sagacity of the old, who have learned, by long observation, to avoid what hurt them, and pursue what gave ease or pleasure. A horse that has been accustomed to the field becomes acquainted with the proper height which he can leap, and will never attempt what exceeds his force and ability. An old greyhound will trust the more fatiguing part of the chase to the younger, and will place himself so as to meet the hare in her doubles; nor are the conjectures which he forms on this occasion founded on anything but his observation and experience.

"This is still more evident from the effects of discipline and education on animals, who, by the proper application of rewards and punishments, may be taught any course of action, the most contrary to their natural instincts and propensities. It is not experience which renders a dog apprehensive of pain when you menace him or lift up the whip to beat him? Is it not even experience which makes him answer to his name, and infer from such an arbitrary sound that you mean him rather than any of his fellows, and intend to call him, when you pronounced it in a certain manner and with a certain tone and accent?

"In all these cases we may observe that the animal infers some fact beyond what immediately strikes his senses; and that this inference is altogether founded on past experience, while the creature expects from the present object the same consequences which it has always found in its observation to result from similar objects.

"*Secondly*, it is impossible that this inference of the animal can be founded on any process of argument or reasoning, by which he concludes that like events must follow like objects, and that the course of nature will always be regular in its operations. For if there be in reality any arguments of this nature, they surely lie too abstruse for the observation of such imperfect understandings; since it may well employ the utmost care and attention of a philosophic genius to discover and observe them. Animals, therefore, are not guided in these inferences by reasoning; neither are children; neither are the generality of mankind in their ordinary actions and conclusions; neither are philosophers themselves, who, in all the active parts of life, are in the main the same as the vulgar, and are governed by the same maxims. Nature must have provided some other principle, of more ready and more general use and application; nor can an operation of such immense consequence in life as that of inferring effects from causes, be trusted to the uncertain process of reasoning and argumentation. Were this doubtful with regard to men, it seems to admit of no question with regard to the brute creation; and the conclusion being once firmly established in the one, we have a strong presumption, from all the rules of analogy, that it ought to be universally admitted, without any exception or reserve. It is custom alone which engages animals, from every object that strikes their senses, to infer its usual attendant, and carries their imagination from the appearance of the one to conceive the other, in that particular manner which we denominate *belief*. No other explication can be given of this operation in all the higher as well as lower classes of sensitive beings which fall under our notice and observation."—(IV. pp. 122—4.)

It will be observed that Hume appears to contrast the "inference of the animal" with the "process of argument or reasoning in man." But it would be a complete misapprehension of his intention, if we were to suppose that he thereby means to imply that there is any real difference between the two processes. The "inference of the animal" is a potential belief of expectation; the pro-

cess of argument, or reasoning, in man is based upon potential beliefs of expectation, which are formed in the man exactly in the same way as in the animal. But, in men endowed with speech, the mental state which constitutes the potential belief is represented by a verbal proposition, and thus becomes what all the world recognises as a belief. The fallacy which Hume combats is that the proposition, or verbal representative of a belief, has come to be regarded as a reality, instead of as the mere symbol which it really is; and that reasoning, or logic, which deals with nothing but propositions, is supposed to be necessary in order to validate the natural fact symbolised by those propositions. It is a fallacy similar to that of supposing that money is the foundation of wealth, whereas it is only the wholly unessential symbol of property.

In the passage which immediately follows that just quoted, Hume makes admissions which might be turned to serious account against some of his own doctrines:

"But though animals learn many parts of their knowledge from observation, there are also many parts of it which they derive from the original hand of Nature, which much exceed the share of capacity they possess on ordinary occasions, and in which they improve, little or nothing, by the longest practice and experience. These we denominate INSTINCTS, and are so apt to admire as something very extraordinary and inexplicable by all the disquisitions of human understanding. But our wonder will perhaps cease or diminish when we consider that the experimental reasoning itself, which we possess in common with beasts, and on which the whole conduct of life depends, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power, that acts in us unknown to ourselves, and in its chief operations is not directed by any such relations or comparison of ideas as are the proper objects of our intellectual faculties.

"Though the instinct be different, yet still it is an instinct which teaches a man to avoid the fire, as much as that which teaches a bird, with such exactness, the art of incubation and the whole economy and order of its nursery."—(IV. pp. 125, 126.)

The parallel here drawn between the "avoidance of a fire" by a man and the incubatory instinct of a bird is inexact. The man avoids fire when he has had experience of the pain produced by burning; but the bird incubates the first time it lays eggs, and therefore before it has had any experience of incubation. For the comparison to be admissible, it would be necessary that a man should avoid fire the first time he saw it, which is notoriously not the case.

The term "instinct" is very vague and ill-defined. It is commonly employed to denote any action, or even feeling, which is not dictated by conscious reasoning, whether it is, or is not, the result of previous experience. It is "instinct" which leads a chicken just hatched to pick up a grain of corn; parental love is said to be "instinctive;" the drowning man who catches at a straw does it "instinctively;" and the hand that accidentally touches something hot is drawn back by "instinct." Thus "instinct" is made to cover everything from a simple reflex movement, in which the

organ of consciousness need not be at all implicated, up to a complex combination of acts directed towards a definite end and accompanied by intense consciousness.

But this loose employment of the term "instinct" really accords with the nature of the thing; for it is wholly impossible to draw any line of demarcation between reflex actions and instincts. If a frog, on the flank of which a little drop of acid has been placed, rubs it off with the foot of the same side; and, if that foot be held, performs the same operation, at the cost of much effort, with the other foot, it certainly displays a curious distinct. But is no less true that the whole operation is a reflex operation of the spinal cord, which can be performed quite as well when the brain is destroyed; and between which and simple reflex actions there is a complete series of gradations. In like manner, when an infant takes the breast, it is impossible to say whether the action should be rather termed instinctive or reflex.

What are usually called the instincts of animals are, however, acts of such a nature that, if they were performed by men, they would involve the generation of a series of ideas and of inferences from them; and it is a curious, and apparently an insoluble, problem whether they are, or are not, accompanied by cerebral changes of the same nature as those which give rise to ideas and inferences in ourselves. When a chicken picks up a grain, for example, are there, firstly, certain sensations, accompanied by the feeling of relation between the grain and its own body; secondly, a desire of the grain; thirdly, a volition to seize it? Or, are only the sensational terms of the serious actually represented in consciousness?

The latter seems the more probable opinion, though it must be admitted that the other alternative is possible. But, in this case, the series of mental states which occurs is such as would be represented in language by a series of propositions, and would afford proof positive of the existence of innate ideas, in the Cartesian sense. Indeed, a metaphysical fowl, brooding over the mental operations of his fully fledged consciousness, might appeal to the fact as proof that, in the very first action of his life, he assumed the existence of the Ego and the non-Ego, and of a relation between the two.

In all seriousness, if the existence of instincts be granted, the possibility of the existence of innate ideas, in the most extended sense ever imagined by Descartes, must also be admitted. In fact, Descartes, as we have seen, illustrates what he means by an innate idea, by the analogy of hereditary diseases or hereditary mental peculiarities, such as generosity. On the other hand, hereditary mental tendencies may justly be termed instincts; and still more appropriately might those special proclivities, which constitute what we call genius, come into the same category.

The child who is impelled to draw as soon as it can hold a pencil; the Mozart who breaks out into music as early; the boy Bidder who worked out the most complicated sums without learn-

ing arithmetic; the boy Pascal who evolved Euclid out of his own consciousness: all these may be said to have been impelled by instinct, as much as are the beaver and the bee. And the man of genius is distinct in kind from the man of cleverness, by reason of the working within him of strong innate tendencies—which cultivation may improve, but which it can no more create than horticulture can make thistles bear figs. The analogy between a musical instrument and the mind holds good here also. Art and industry may get much music, of a sort, out of a penny whistle; but, when all is done, it has no chance against an organ. The innate musical potentialities of the two are infinitely different.

CHAPTER VI.

LANGUAGE—PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING NECESSARY TRUTHS.

THOUGH we may accept Hume's conclusion that speechless animals think, believe, and reason; yet it must be borne in mind that there is an important difference between the signification of the terms when applied to them and when applied to those animals which possess language. The thoughts of the former are trains of mere feelings; those of the latter are, in addition, trains of the ideas of the signs which represent feelings, and which are called "words."

A word, in fact, is a spoken or written sign, the idea of which is, by repetition, so closely associated with the idea of the simple or complex feeling which it represents, that the association becomes indissoluble. No Englishman, for example, can think of the word "dog" without immediately having the idea of the group of impressions to which that name is given; and, conversely, the group of impressions immediately calls up the idea of the word "dog."

The association of words with impressions and ideas is the process of naming; and language approaches perfection, in proportion as the shades of difference between various ideas and impressions are represented by differences in their names.

The names of simple impressions and ideas, or of groups of co-existent or successive complex impressions and ideas, considered *per se*, are substantives; as redness, dog, silver, mouth; while the names of impressions or ideas considered as parts or attributes of a complex whole, are adjectives. Thus redness, considered as part of the complex idea of a rose, becomes the adjective red; flesh-eater, as part of the idea of a dog, is represented by carnivorous; whiteness, as part of the idea of silver, is white; and so on.

The linguistic machinery for the expression of belief is called *predication;* and, as all beliefs express ideas of relation, we may say that the sign of predication is the verbal symbol of a feeling of relation. The words which serve to indicate predication are verbs. If I say "silver" and then "white," I merely utter two names; but if I interpose between them the verb "is," I express a belief in the co-existence of the feeling of whiteness with the other feelings which constitute the totality of the complex idea of silver; in other words, I predicate "whiteness" of silver.

In such a case as this, the verb expresses predication and nothing else, and is called a copula. But, in the great majority of verbs, the word is the sign of a complex idea, and the predication is expressed only by its form. Thus in "silver shines," the verb "to shine" is the sign for the feeling of brightness, and the mark of predication lies in the form "shine-*s*."

Another result is brought about by the forms of verbs. By slight modifications they are made to indicate that a belief, or predication, is a memory, or is an expectation. Thus "silver *shone*" expresses a memory; "*will* shine" an expectation.

The form of words which expresses a predication is a proposition. Hence, every predication is the verbal equivalent of a belief; and as every belief is either an immediate consciousness, a memory, or an expectation, and as every expectation is traceable to a memory, it follows that, in the long run, all propositions express either immediate states of consciousness or memories. The proposition which predicates A of X must mean either, that the fact is testified by my present consciousness, as when I say that two colours, visible at this moment, resemble one another; or that A is indissolubly associated with X in memory; or that A is indissolubly associated with X in expectation. But it has already been shown that expection is only an expression of memory.

Hume does not discuss the nature of language, but so much of what remains to be said, concerning his philosophical tenets, turns upon the value and the origin of verbal propositions, that this summary sketch of the relations of language to the thinking process will probably not be deemed superfluous.

So large an extent of the field of thought is traversed by Hume, in his discussion of the verbal propositions in which mankind enshrine their beliefs, that it would be impossible to follow him throughout all the windings of his long journey within the limits of this essay. I purpose, therefore, to limit myself to those propositions which concern—1. Necessary Truths; 2. The order of Nature; 3. The Soul; 4. Theism; 5. The Passions and Volition; 6. The Principle of Morals.

Hume's views respecting necessary truths, and more particularly concerning causation, have, more than any other part of his teaching, contributed to give him a prominent place in the history of philosophy.

"All the objects of human reason and inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, *relations of ideas* and *matter of fact*. Of the first kind are the sciences of geometry, algebra, and arithmetic, and, in short, every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain. *That the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the square of the two sides*, is a proposition which expresses a relation between these two figures. *That three times five is equal to the half of thirty*, expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought without dependence on whatever is anywhere existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or a triangle

in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would for ever retain their certainty and evidence.

"Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner, nor is an evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness as if ever so conformable to reality. *That the sun will not rise to-morrow*, is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation *that it will rise.* We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind."—(IV., pp. 32, 33.)

The distinction here drawn between the truths of geometry and other kinds of truth is far less sharply indicated in the *Treatise*, but as Hume expressly disowns any opinions on these matters but such as are expressed in the *Inquiry*, we may confine ourselves to the latter; and it is needful to look narrowly into the propositions here laid down, as much stress has been laid upon Hume's admission that the truths of mathematics are intuitively and demonstratively certain; in other words, that they are necessary and, in that respect, differ from all other kinds of belief.

What is meant by the assertion that "propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe?"

Suppose that there were no such things as impressions of sight and touch anywhere in the universe, what idea could we have even of a straight line, much less of a triangle and of the relations between its sides? The fundamental proposition of all Hume's philosophy is that ideas are copied from impressions; and, therefore, if there were no impressions of straight lines and triangles, there could be no ideas of straight lines and triangles. But what we mean by the universe is the sum of our actual and possible impressions.

So, again, whether our conception of number is derived from relations of impressions in space or in time, the impressions must exist in nature, that is, is in experience, before their relations can be perceived. Form and number are mere names for certain relations between matters of fact; unless a man had seen or felt the difference between a straight line and a crooked one, straight and crooked would have no more meaning to him than red and blue to the blind.

The axiom, that things which are equal to the same are equal to one another, is only a particular case of the predication of similarity; if there were no impressions, it is obvious that there could be no predicates. But what is an existence in the universe but an impression?

If what are called necessary truths are rigidly analysed, they will be found to be of two kinds. Either they depend on the convention which underlies the possibility of intelligible speech, that

terms shall always have the same meaning; or they are propositions the negation of which implies the dissolution of some association in memory or expectation, which is in fact indissoluble; or the denial of some fact of immediate consciousness.

The "necessary truth" A = A means that the perception which is called A shall always be called A. The "necessary truth" that "two straight lines cannot inclose a space," means that we have no memory, and can form no expectation of their so doing. The denial of the "necessary truth" that the thought now in my mind exists, involves the denial of consciousness.

To the assertion that the evidence of matter of fact is not so strong as that of relations of ideas, may be justly replied that a great number of matters of fact are nothing but relations of ideas. If I say that red is unlike blue, I make an assertion concerning a relation of ideas; but it is also matter of fact, and the contrary proposition is inconceivable. If I remember * something that happened five minutes ago, that is matter of fact; and, at the same time, it expresses a relation between the event remembered and the present time. It is wholly inconceivable to me that the event did not happen, so that my assurance respecting it is as strong as that which I have respecting any other necessary truth. In fact, the man is either very wise or very virtuous, or very lucky, perhaps all three, who has gone through life without accumulating a store of such necessary beliefs, which he would give a good deal to be able to disbelieve.

It would be beside the mark to discuss the matter further on the present occasion. It is sufficient to point out that, whatever may be the difference between mathematical and other truths, they do not justify Hume's statement. And it is, at any rate, impossible to prove that the cogency of mathematical first principles is due to anything more than these circumstances; that the experiences with which they are concerned are among the first which arise in the mind; that they are so incessantly repeated as to justify us, according to the ordinary laws of ideation, in expecting that the associations which they form will be of extreme tenacity; while the fact, that the expectations based upon them are always verified, finishes the process of welding them together.

Thus, if the axioms of mathematics are innate, nature would seem to have taken unnecessary trouble; since the ordinary process of association appears to be amply sufficient to confer upon them all the universality and necessity which they actually possess.

Whatever needless admissions Hume may have made respecting other necessary truths, he is quite clear about the axiom of causation, "That whatever event has a beginning must have a cause;" whether and in what sense it is a necessary truth; and, that question being decided, whence it is derived.

* Hume, however, expressly includes the "records of our memory" among his matters of fact. (IV. p. 33.)

With respect to the first question, Hume denies that it is a necessary truth, in the sense that we are unable to conceive the contrary. The evidence by which he supports this conclusion in the *Inquiry*, however, is not strictly relevant to the issue.

"No object ever discovers, by the qualities which appear to the senses, either the cause which produced it, or the effects which will arise from it; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact."—(IV. p. 35.)

Abundant illustrations are given of this assertion, which, indeed, cannot be seriously doubted; but it does not follow that, because we are totally unable to say what cause preceded, or what effect will succeed, any event, we do not necessarily suppose that the event had a cause and will be succeeded by an effect. The scientific investigator who notes a new phenomenon may be utterly ignorant of its cause, but he will, without hesitation, seek for that cause. If you ask him why he does so, he will probably say that it must have had a cause; and thereby imply that his belief in causation is a necessary belief.

In the *Treatise* Hume, indeed, takes the bull by the horns:

". . . as all distinct ideas are separable from each other, and as the ideas of cause and effect are evidently distinct, 'twill be easy for us to conceive any object to be non-existent this moment and existent the next, without conjoining to it the distinct idea of a cause or productive principle."—(I. p. 111.)

If Hume had been content to state what he believes to be matter of fact, and had abstained from giving superfluous reasons for that which is susceptible of being proved or disproved only by personal experience, his position would have been stronger. For it seems clear that, on the ground of observation, he is quite right. Any man who lets his fancy run riot in a waking dream may experience the existence at one moment, and the non-existence at the next, of phenomena which suggest no connexion of cause and effect. Not only so, but it is notorious that, to the unthinking mass of mankind, nine-tenths of the facts of life do not suggest the relation of cause and effect; and they practically deny the existence of any such relation by attributing them to chance. Few gamblers but would stare if they were told that the falling of a die on a particular face is as much the effect of a definite cause as the fact of its falling; it is a proverb that "the wind bloweth where it listeth;" and even thoughtful men usually receive with surprise the suggestion, that the form of the crest of every wave that breaks, wind driven, on the sea-shore, and the direction of every particle of foam that flies before the gale, are the exact effects of definite causes; and, as such, must be capable of being determined, deductively, from the laws of motion and the properties of air and water. So, again, there are large numbers of highly intelligent persons who rather pride themselves on their fixed belief that our volitions

have no cause; or that the will causes itself, which is either the same thing, or a contradiction in terms.

Hume's argument in support of what appears to be a true proposition, however, is of the circular sort, for the major premiss, that all distinct ideas are separable in thought, assumes the question at issue.

But the question whether the idea of causation is necessary or not is really of very little importance. For, to say that an idea is necessary is simply to affirm that we cannot conceive the contrary; and the fact that we cannot conceive the contrary of any belief may be a presumption, but is certainly no proof of its truth.

In the well-known experiment of touching a single round object, such as a marble, with crossed fingers, it is utterly impossible to conceive that we have not two round objects under them; and, though light is undoubtedly a mere sensation arising in the brain, it is utterly impossible to conceive that it is not outside the retina. In the same way, he who touches anything with a rod, not only is irresistibly led to believe that the sensation of contact is at the end of the rod, but is utterly incapable of conceiving that this sensation is really in his head. Yet that which is inconceivable is manifestly true in all these cases. The belief and the unbeliefs are alike necessary, and alike erroneous.

It is commonly urged that the axiom of causation cannot be derived from experience, because experience only proves that many things have causes, whereas the axiom declares that all things have causes. The syllogism, "many things which come into existence have causes, A has come into existence: therefore A had a cause." is obviously fallacious, if A is not previously shown to be one of the "many things." And this objection is perfectly sound so far as it goes. The axiom of causation cannot possibly be deduced from any general proposition which simply embodies experience. But it does not follow that the belief, or expectation, expressed by the axiom, is not a product of experience, generated antecedently to, and altogether independently of, the logically unjustifiable language in which we express it.

In fact, the axiom of causation resembles all other beliefs of expectation in being the verbal symbol of a purely automatic act of the mind, which is altogether extra-logical, and would be illogical, if it were not constantly verified by experience. Experience, as we have seen, stores up memories; memories generate expectations or beliefs—why they do so may be explained hereafter by proper investigation of cerebral physiology. But, to seek for the reason of the facts in the verbal symbols by which they are expressed, and to be astonished that it is not to be found there, is surely singular; and what Hume did was to turn attention from the verbal proposition to the psychical fact of which it is the symbol.

"When any natural object or event is presented, it is impossible for us, by any sagacity or penetration, to discover, or even conjecture, without experience, what event will result from it, or to carry our foresight beyond

that object, which is immediately present to the memory and senses. Even after one instance or experiment, where we have observed a particular event to follow upon another, we are not entitled to form a general rule, or foretell what will happen in like cases; it being justly esteemed an unpardonable temerity to judge of the whole course of nature from one single experiment, however accurate or certain. But when one particular species of events has always, in all instances, been conjoined with another, we make no longer any scruple of foretelling one upon the appearance of the other, and of employing that reasoning which can alone assure us of any matter of fact or existence. We then call the one object *Cause*, the other *Effect*. We suppose that there is some connexion between them: some power in the one, by which it infallibly produces the other, and operates with the greatest certainty and strongest necessity. . . . But there is nothing in a number of instances, different from every single instance, which is supposed to be exactly similar; except only, that after a repetition of similar instances, the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant, and to believe that it will exist. . . . The first time a man saw the communication of motion by impulse, as by the shock of two billiard balls, he could not pronounce that the one event was *connected*, but only that it was *conjoined*, with the other. After he has observed several instances of this nature, he then pronounces them to be *connected*. What alteration has happened to give rise to this new idea of *connexion!* Nothing but that he now *feels* these events to be *connected* in his imagination, and can readily foresee the existence of the one from the appearance of the other. When we say, therefore, that one object is connected with another, we mean only that they have acquired a connexion in our thought, and give rise to this inference, by which they become proofs of each other's existence: a conclusion which is somewhat extraordinary, but which seems founded on sufficient evidence."—(IV. pp. 87—89.)

In the fifteenth section of the third part of the *Treatise*, under the head of the *Rules by which to Judge of Causes and Effects*, Hume gives a sketch of the method of allocating effects to their causes, upon which, so far as I am aware, no improvement was made down to the time of the publication of Mill's *Logic*. Of Mill's four methods, that of *agreement* is indicated in the following passage:—

". . . where several different objects produce the same effect, it must be by means of some quality which we discover to be common amongst them. For as like effects imply like causes, we must always ascribe the causation to the circumstance wherein we discover the resemblance."—(I. p. 229.)

Next, the foundation of the *method of difference* is stated:—

"The difference in the effects of two resembling objects must proceed from that particular in which they differ. For, as like causes always produce like effects, when in any instance we find our expectation to be disappointed, we must conclude that this irregularity proceeds from some difference in the causes."—(I. p. 230.)

In the succeeding paragraph the *method of concomitant variations* is foreshadowed.

"When any object increases or diminishes with the increase or diminution of the cause, 'tis to be regarded as a compounded effect, derived from the union of the several different effects which arise from the several different parts of the cause. The absence or presence of one part of the cause is here supposed to be always attended with the absence or presence of a proportionable part of the effect. This constant conjunction sufficiently proves that the one part is the cause of the other. We must, however, beware not to draw such a conclusion from a few experiments."—(I. p. 230.)

Lastly, the following rule, though awkwardly stated, contains a suggestion of the *methods of residues* :—

". . . an object which exists for any time in its full perfection without any effect, is not the sole cause of that effect, but requires to be assisted by some other principle, which may forward its influence and operation. For as like effects necessarily follow from like causes, and in a contiguous time and place, their separation for a moment shows that these causes are not complete ones."—(I. p. 230.)

In addition to the bare notion of necessary connexion between the cause and its effect, we undoubtedly find in our minds the idea of something resident in the cause which, as we say, produces the effect, and we call this something Force, Power, or Energy. Hume explains Force and Power as the results of the association with inanimate causes of the feelings of endeavour or resistance which we experience, when our bodies give rise to, or resist, motion.

If I throw a ball, I have sense of effort which ends when the ball leaves my hand; and, if I catch a ball, I have a sense of resistance which comes to an end with the quiescence of the ball. In the former case, there is a strong suggestion of something having gone from myself into the ball; in the latter, of something having been received from the ball. Let any one hold a piece of iron near a strong magnet, and the feeling that the magnet endeavours to pull the iron one way in the same manner as he endeavours to pull it in the opposite direction, is very strong.

As Hume says :—

"No animal can put external bodies in motion without the sentiments of a *nisus*, or endeavour; and every animal has a sentiment or feeling from the stroke or blow of an external object that is in motion. These sensations, which are merely animal, and from which we can, *a priori*, draw no inference, we are apt to transfer to inanimate objects, and to suppose that they have some such feelings whenever they transfer or receive motion."—(IV. p. 91, *note*.)

It is obviously, however, an absurdity not less gross than that of supposing the sensation of warmth to exist in a fire, to imagine that the subjective sensation of effort or resistance in ourselves can be present in external objects, when they stand in the relation of causes to other objects.

To the argument, that we have a right to suppose the relation of

cause and effect to contain something more than invariable succession, because, when we ourselves act as causes, or in volition, we are conscious of exerting power; Hume replies, that we know nothing of the feeling we call power except as effort or resistance; and that we have not the slightest means of knowing whether it has anything to do with the production of bodily motion or mental changes. And he points out, as Descartes and Spinoza had done before him, that when voluntary motion takes place, that which we will is not the immediate consequence of the act of volition, but something which is separated from it by a long chain of causes and effects. If the will is the cause of the movement of a limb, it can be so only in the sense that the guard who gives the order to go on, is the cause of the transport of a train from one station to another.

"We learn from anatomy, that the immediate object of power in voluntary motion is not the member itself which is moved, but certain muscles and nerves and animal spirits, and perhaps something still more minute and unknown, through which the motion is successively propagated, ere it reach the member itself, whose motion is the immediate object of volition. Can there be a more certain proof that the power by which the whole operation is performed, so far from being directly and fully known by an inward sentiment or consciousness, is to the last degree mysterious and unintelligible? Here the mind wills a certain event: Immediately another event, unknown to ourselves, and totally different from the one intended, is produced; This event produces another equally unknown: Till at last, through a long succession, the desired event is produced."—(IV. p. 78.)

A still stronger argument against ascribing an objective existence to force or power, on the strength of our supposed direct intuition of power in voluntary acts, may be urged from the unquestionable fact, that we do not know, and cannot know, that volition does cause corporeal motion; while there is a great deal to be said in favour of the view that it is no cause, but merely a concomitant of that motion. But the nature of volition will be more fitly considered hereafter.

CHAPTER VII.

ORDER OF NATURE: MIRACLES.

If our beliefs of expectation are based on our beliefs of memory, and anticipation is only inverted recollection, it necessarily follows that every belief of expectation implies the belief that the future will have a certain resemblance to the past. From the first hour of experience, onwards, this belief is constantly being verified, until old age is inclined to suspect that experience has nothing new to offer. And when the experience of generation after generation is recorded, and a single book tells us more than Methuselah could have learned, had he spent every waking hour of his thousand years in learning; when apparent disorders are found to be only the recurrent pulses of a slow working order, and the wonder of a year becomes the commonplace of a century; when repeated and minute examination never reveals a break in the chain of causes and effects; and the whole edifice of practical life is built upon our faith in its continuity; the belief that that chain has never been broken and will never be broken, becomes one of the strongest and most justifiable of human convictions. And it must be admitted to be a reasonable request, if we ask those who would have us put faith in the actual occurrence of interruptions of that order, to produce evidence in favour of their view, not only equal, but superior, in weight to that which leads us to adopt ours.

This is the essential argument of Hume's famous disquisition upon miracles; and it may safely be declared to be irrefragable. But it must be admitted that Hume has surrounded the kernel of his essay with a shell of very doubtful value.

The first step in this, as in all other discussions, is to come to a clear understanding as to the meaning of the terms employed. Argumentation whether miracles are possible, and, if possible, credible, is mere beating the air until the arguers have agreed what they mean by the word "miracles."

Hume, with less than his usual perspicuity, but in accordance with a common practice of believers in the miraculous, defines a miracle as a "violation of the laws of nature," or as "a tr ansgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent."

There must, he says,—

"be an uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation. And as an uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle; nor can such a proof be destroyed or the miracle rendered credible but by an opposite proof which is superior."—(IV. p. 134.)

Every one of these dicta appears to be open to serious objection.

The word "miracle"—*miraculum*—in its primitive and legitimate sense, simply means something wonderful.

Cicero applies it as readily to the fancies of philosophers, "Portenta et miracula philosophorum somniantium," as we do to the prodigies of priests. And the source of the wonder which a miracle excites is the belief, on the part of those who witness it, that it transcends or contradicts ordinary experience.

The definition of a miracle as a "violation of the laws of nature" is, in reality, an employment of language which, on the face of the matter, cannot be justified. For "nature" means neither more nor less than that which is; the sum of phenomena presented to our experience; the totality of events past, present, and to come. Every event must be taken to be a part of nature, until proof to the contrary is supplied. And such proof is, from the nature of the case, impossible.

Hume asks:—

"Why is it more than probable that all men must die: that lead cannot of itself remain suspended in the air: that fire consumes wood and is extinguished by water; unless it be that these events are found agreeable to the laws of nature, and there is required a violation of those laws, or, in other words, a miracle, to prevent them?"—(IV. p. 133.)

But the reply is obvious; not one of these events is "more than probable;" though the probability may reach such a very high degree that, in ordinary language, we are justified in saying that the opposite events are impossible. Calling our often verified experience a "law of nature" adds nothing to its value, nor in the slightest degree increases any probability that it will be verified again, which may arise out of the fact of its frequent verification.

If a piece of lead were to remain suspended of itself in the air, the occurrence would be a "miracle," in the sense of a wonderful event, indeed; but no one trained in the methods of science would imagine that any law of nature was really violated thereby. He would simply set to work to investigate the conditions under which so highly unexpected an occurrence took place, and thereby enlarge his experience and modify his hitherto unduly narrow conception of the laws of nature.

The alternative definition, that a miracle is "a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent" (IV.p. 134, *note*), is still less de-

fensible. For a vast number of miracles have professedly been worked, neither by the Deity, nor by any invisible agent; but by Beelzebub and his compeers, or by very visible men.

Moreover, not to repeat what has been said respecting the absurdity of supposing that something which occurs is a transgression of laws, our only knowledge of which is derived from the observation of that which occurs; upon what sort of evidence can we be justified in concluding that a given event is the effect of a particular volition of the Deity, or of the interposition of some invisible (that is, unperceivable) agent? It may be so, but how is the assertion that it is so to be tested? If it be said that the event exceeds the power of natural causes, what can justify such a saying? The day-fly has better grounds for calling a thunderstorm supernatural, than has man, with his experience of an infinitesimal fraction of duration, to say that the most astonishing event that can be imagined is beyond the scope of natural causes.

"Whatever is intelligible and can be distinctly conceived, implies no contradiction, and can never be proved false by any demonstration, argument, or abstract reasoning *a priori*."—(IV. p. 44.)

So wrote Hume, with perfect justice, in his *Sceptical Doubts*. But a miracle, in the sense of a sudden and complete change in the customary order of nature, is intelligible, can be distinctly conceived, implies no contradiction; and, therefore, according to Hume's own showing, cannot be proved false by any demonstrative argument.

Nevertheless, in diametrical contradiction to his own principles, Hume says elsewhere:—

"It is a miracle that a dead man should come to life: because that has never been observed in any age or country."—(IV. p. 134.)

That is to say, there is an uniform experience against such an event, and therefore, if it occurs, it is a violation of the laws of nature. Or, to put the argument in its naked absurdity, that which never has happened never can happen, without a violation of the laws of nature. In truth, if a dead man did come to life, the fact would be evidence, not that any law of nature had been violated, but that those laws, even when they express the results of a very long and uniform experience, are necessarily based on incomplete knowledge, and are to be held only as grounds of more or less justifiable expectation.

To sum up, the definition of a miracle as a suspension or a contravention of the order of Nature is self-contradictory, because all we know of the order of Nature is derived from our observation of the course of events of which the so-called miracle is a part. On the other hand, no event is too extraordinary to be impossible; and, therefore, if by the term miracles we mean only "extremely wonderful events," there can be no iust ground for denying the possibility of their occurrence.

But when we turn from the question of the possibility of miracles however they may be defined, in the abstract, to that respecting the grounds upon which we are justified in believing any particular miracle, Hume's arguments have a very different value, for they resolve themselves into a simple statement of the dictates of common sense—which may be expressed in this canon: the more a statement of fact conflicts with previous experience, the more complete must be the evidence which is to justify us in believing it. It is upon this principle that every one carries on the business of common life. If a man tells me he saw a piebald horse in Piccadilly, I believe him without hesitation. The thing itself is likely enough, and there is no imaginable motive for his deceiving me. But if the same person tells me he observed a zebra there, I might hesitate a little about accepting his testimony, unless I were well satisfied, not only as to his previous acquaintance with zebras, but as to his powers and opportunities of observation in the present case. If, however, my informant assured me that he beheld a centaur trotting down that famous thoroughfare, I should emphatically decline to credit his statement; and this even if he were the most saintly of men and ready to suffer martyrdom in support of his belief. In such a case, I could, of course, entertain no doubt of the good faith of the witness; it would be only his competency, which unfortunately has very little to do with good faith or intensity of conviction, which I should presume to call in question.

Indeed, I hardly know what testimony would satisfy me of the existence of a live centaur. To put an extreme case, suppose the late Johannes Muller, of Berlin, the greatest anatomist and physiologist among my contemporaries, had barely affirmed he had seen a live centaur, I should certainly have been staggered by the weight of an assertion coming from such an authority. But I could have got no further than a suspension of judgment. For, on the whole, it would have been more probable that even he had fallen into some error of interpretation of the facts which came under his observation, than that such an animal as a centaur really existed. And nothing short of a careful monograph, by a highly competent investigator, accompanied by figures and measurements of all the most important parts of a centaur, put forth under circumstances which could leave no doubt that falsification or misinterpretation would meet with immediate exposure, could possibly enable a man of science to feel that he acted conscientiously in expressing his belief in the existence of a centaur on the evidence of testimony.

This hesitation about admitting the existence of such an animal as a centaur, be it observed, does not deserve reproach, as scepticism, but moderate praise, as mere scientific good faith. It need not imply, and it does not, so far as I am concerned, any *a priori* hypothesis that a centaur is an impossible animal; or that his existence, if he did exist, would violate the laws of nature. Indubitably, the organisation of a centaur presents a variety of practical difficulties to an anatomist and physiologist; and a good many of those generalisations of our present experience, which we are

pleased to call laws of nature, would be upset by the appearance of such an animal, so that we should have to frame new laws to cover our extended experience. Every wise man will admit that the possibilities of nature are infinite, and include centaurs; but he will not the less feel it his duty to hold fast, for the present, by the dictum of Lucretius, "Nam certe ex vivo Centauri non fit imago," and to cast the entire burthen of proof, that centaurs exist, on the shoulders of those who ask him to believe the statement.

Judged by the canons either of common sense or of science, which are indeed one and the same, all "miracles" are centaurs, or they would not be miracles; and men of sense and science will deal with them on the same principles. No one who wishes to keep well within the limits of that which he has a right to assert will affirm that it is impossible that the sun and moon should ever have been made to appear to stand still in the valley of Ajalon: or that the walls of a city should have fallen down at a trumpet blast; or that water was turned into wine; because such events are contrary to uniform experience and violate laws of nature. For aught he can prove to the contrary, such events may appear in the order of nature to-morrow. But common sense and common honesty alike oblige him to demand from those who would have him believe in the actual occurrence of such events, evidence of a cogency proportionate to their departure from probability; evidence at least as strong as that which the man who says he has seen a centaur is bound to produce, unless he is content to be thought either more than credulous or less than honest.

But are there any miracles on record, the evidence for which fulfils the plain and simple requirements alike of elementary morality?

Hume answers this question without the smallest hesitation, and with all the authority of a historical specialist:—

> "There is not to be found, in all history, any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned goodness, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted integrity, as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; and at the same time attesting facts, performed in such a public manner, and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable: All which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance of the testimony of men."—(IV. p. 135.)

These are grave assertions, but they are least likely to be challenged by those who have made it their business to weigh evidence and to give their decision under a due sense of the moral responsibility which they incur in so doing.

It is probable that few persons who proclaim their belief in miracles have considered what would be necessary to justify that belief in the case of a professed modern miracle-worker. Suppose, for example, it is affirmed that A.B. died, and that C.D. brought him to

life again. Let it be granted that A.B. and C.D. are persons of unimpeachable honour and veracity; that C.D. is the next heir to A.B.'s estate, and therefore had a strong motive for not bringing him to life again; and that all A.B.'s relations, respectable persons who bore him a strong affection, or had otherwise an interest in his being alive, declared that they saw him die. Furthermore, let A. B. be seen afer his recovery by all his friends and neighbours, and let his and their depositions, that he is now alive, be taken down before a magistrate of known integrity and acuteness; would all this constitute even presumptive evidence that C.D. had worked a miracle? Unquestionably not. For the most important link in the whole chain of evidence is wanting, and that is the proof that A.B. was really dead. The evidence of ordinary observers on such a point as this is absolutely worthless. And even medical evidence, unless the physician is a person of unusual knowledge and skill, may have little more value. Unless careful thermometric observation proves that the temperature has sunk below a certain point; unless the cadaveric stiffening of the muscles has become well established; all the ordinary signs of death may be fallacious, and the intervention of C.D. may have had no more to do with A.B.'s restoration to life than any other fortuitously coincident event.

It may be said that such a coincidence would be more wonderful than the miracle itself. Nevertheless history acquaints us with coincidences as marvellous.

On the 19th of February, 1842, Sir Robert Sale held Jellalabad with a small English force, and, daily expecting attack from an overwhelming force of Afghans, had spent three months in incessantly labouring to improve the fortifications of the town. Akbar Khan had approached within a few miles, and an onslaught of his army was supposed to be imminent. That morning an earthquake—

"nearly destroyed the town, threw down the greater part of the parapets, the central gate with the adjoining bastions, and a part of the new bastion which flanked it. Three other bastions were also nearly destroyed, whilst several large breaches were made in the curtains, and the Peshawur side, eighty feet long, was quite practicable, the ditch being filled, and the descent easy. Thus in one moment the labours of three months were in a great measure destroyed,"*

If Akbar Khan had happened to give orders for an assault in the early morning of the 19th of February, what good follower of the Prophet could have doubted that Allah had lent his aid? As it chanced, however, Mahometan faith in the miraculous took another turn; for the energetic defenders of the post had repaired the damage by the end of the month; and the enemy, finding no signs of the earthquake when they invested the place, ascribed the supposed immunity of Jellalabad to English witchcraft.

But the conditions of belief do not vary with time or place; and,

* Report of Captain Broadfoot, garrison engineer, quoted in Kaye's *Afghanistan.*

if it is undeniable that evidence of so complete and weighty a character is needed, at the present time, for the establishment of the occurrence of such a wonder as that supposed, it has always been needful. Those who study the extant records of miracles with due attention will judge for themselves how far it has ever been supplied.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEISM; EVOLUTION OF THEOLOGY.

HUME seems to have had but two hearty dislikes: the one to the English nation, and the other to all the professors of dogmatic theology. The one aversion he vented only privately to his friends; but if he is ever bitter in his public utterances, it is against priests * in general and theological enthusiasts and fanatics in particular; if he ever seems insincere, it is when he wishes to insult theologians by a parade of sarcastic respect. One need go no further than the peroration of the *Essay on Miracles* for a characteristic illustration.

"I am the better pleased with the method of reasoning here delivered, as I think it may serve to confound those dangerous friends and disguised enemies to the *Christian religion* who have undertaken to defend it by the principles of human reason. Our most holy religion is founded on *Faith*, not on reason, and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure . . . the Christian religion not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity: And whoever is moved by *Faith* to assent to it, is conscious of a continual miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience."—(IV. pp. 153, 154.)

It is obvious that, here and elsewhere, Hume, adopting a popular confusion of ideas, uses religion as the equivalent of dogmatic theology; and, therefore, he says, with perfect justice, that "religion is nothing but a species of philosophy" (iv. p. 171). Here no doubt lies the root of his antagonism. The quarrels of theologians and philosophers have not been about religion, but about philosophy; and philosophers not unfrequently seem to entertain the same feeling towards theologians that sportsmen cherish towards poachers. "There cannot be two passions more nearly

* In a note to the Essay on Superstition and Enthusiasm, Hume is careful to define what he means by this term. "By priests I understand only the pretenders to power and dominion, and to a superior sanctity of character, distinct from virtue and good morals. These are very different from *clergymen*, who are set apart to the care of sacred matters, and the conducting our public devotions with greater decency and order. There is no rank of men more to be respected than the latter.—(III. p. 83.)

resembling each other than hunting and philosophy," says Hume. And philosophic hunters are given to think that, while they pursue truth for its own sake, out of pure love for the chase (perhaps mingled with a little human weakness to be thought good shots), and by open and legitimate methods ; their theological competitors too often care merely to supply the market of establishments ; and disdain neither the aid of the snares of superstition, nor the cover of the darkness of ignorance.

Unless some foundation was given for this impression by the theological writers whose works had fallen in Hume's way, it is difficult to account for the depth of feeling which so good-natured a man manifests on the subject.

Thus he writes in the *Natural History of Religion*, with quite unusual acerbity :—

"The chief objection to it [the ancient heathen mythology] with regard to this planet is, that it is not ascertained by any just reason or authority. The ancient tradition insisted on by heathen priests and theologers is but a weak foundation: and transmitted also such a number of contradictory reports, supported all of them by equal authority, that it became absolutely impossible to fix a preference among them. A few volumes, therefore, must contain all the polemical writings of pagan priests: And their whole theology must consist more of traditional stories and superstitious practices than of philosophical argument and controversy.

"But where theism forms the fundamental principle of any popular religion, that tenet is so conformable to sound reason, that philosophy is apt to incorporate itself with such a system of theology. And if the other dogmas of that system be contained in a sacred book such as the Alcoran, or be determined by any visible authority, like that of the Roman pontiff, speculative reasoners naturally carry on their assent, and embrace a theory, which has been instilled into them by their earliest education, and which also possesses some degree of consistence and uniformity. But as these appearances are sure, all of them, to prove deceitful, philosophy will very soon find herself very unequally yoked with her new associate ; and instead of regulating each principle, as they advance together, she is at every turn perverted to serve the purposes of superstition. For besides the unavoidable incoherences, which must be reconciled and adjusted, one may safely affirm, that all popular theology, especially the scholastic, has a kind of appetite for absurdity and contradiction. If that theology went not beyond reason and common sense, her doctrines would appear too easy and familiar. Amazement must of necessity be raised : Mystery affected : Darkness and obscurity sought after : And a foundation of merit afforded to the devout votaries, who desire an opportunity of subduing their rebellious reason by the belief of the most unintelligible sophisms.

"Ecclesiastical history sufficiently confirms these reflections. When a controversy is started, some people always pretend with certainty to foretell the issue. Whichever opinion, say they, is most contrary to plain reason is sure to prevail ; even when the general interest of the system requires not that decision. Though the reproach of heresy may, for some time, be bandied about among the disputants, it always rests at last on the side of reason. Any one, it is pretended, that has but learning enough of this kind to know the definition of *Arian*, *Pelagian*, *Erastian*, *Socinian*, *Sabellian*, *Eutychian*, *Nestorian*, *Monothelite*, &c., not to mention *Protestant*, whose fate is yet uncertain, will be convinced of the truth of thi.

observation. It is thus a system becomes absurd in the end, merely from its being reasonable and philosophical in the beginning.

"To oppose the torrent of scholastic religion by such feeble maxims as these, that *it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be*, that *the whole is greater than a part*, that *two and three make five*, is pretending to stop the ocean with a bulrush. Will you set up profane reason against sacred mystery? No punishment is great enough for your impiety. And the same fires which were kindled for heretics will serve also for the destruction of philosophers."—(IV. pp. 481—3.)

Holding these opinions respecting the recognised systems of theology and their professors, Hume, nevertheless, seems to have had a theology of his own; that is to say, he seems to have thought (though, as will appear, it is needful for an expositor of his opinions to speak very guardedly on this point) that the problem of theism is susceptible of scientific treatment, with something more than a negative result. His opinions are to be gathered from the eleventh section of the *Inquiry* (1748); from the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, which were written at least as early as 1751, though not published till after his death; and from the *Natural History of Religion*, published in 1757.

In the first two pieces, the reader is left to judge for himself which interlocutor in the dialogue represents the thoughts of the author; but, for the views put forward in the last, Hume accepts the responsibility. Unfortunately, this essay deals almost wholly with the historical development of theological ideas; and, on the question of the philosophical foundation of theology, does little more than express the writer's contentment with the argument from design.

"The whole frame of nature bespeaks an Intelligent Author; and no rational inquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion."—(IV. p. 135.)

"Were men led into the apprehension of invisible, intelligent power by a contemplation of the works of nature, they could never possibly entertain any conception but of one single being, who bestowed existence and order on this vast machine, and adjusted all its parts according to one regular plan or connected system. For though, to persons of a certain turn of mind, it may not appear altogether absurd that several independent beings, endowed with superior wisdom, might conspire in the contrivance and execution of one regular plan, yet is this a merely arbitrary supposition, which, even if allowed possible, must be confessed neither to be supported by probability nor necessity All things in the universe are evidently of a piece. Everything is adjusted to everything. One design prevails throughout the whole. And this uniformity leads the mind to acknowledge one author; because the conception of different authors, without any distinction of attributes or operations, serves only to give perplexity to the imagination, without bestowing any satisfaction on the understanding."—(IV. p. 442.)

Thus Hume appears to have sincerely accepted the two fundamental conclusions of the argument from design; firstly, that a

Deity exists; and, secondly, that He possesses attributes more or less allied to those of human intelligence. But, at this embryonic stage of theology, Hume's progress is arrested; and, after a survey of the development of dogma, his "general corollary" is, that—

"The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment, appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject. But such is the frailty of human reason, and such the irresistible contagion of opinion, that even this deliberate doubt could scarcely be upheld: did we not enlarge our view, and, opposing one species of superstition to another, set them a quarrelling; while we ourselves, during their fury and contention, happily make our escape into the calm, though obscure, regions of philosophy."—(IV. p. 513.)

Thus it may be fairly presumed that Hume expresses his own sentiments in the words of the speech with which Philo concludes the *Dialogues*.

"If the whole of natural theology, as some people seem to maintain, resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined proposition, *That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence:* If this proposition be not capable of extension, variation, or more particular explication: If it affords no inference that affects human life or can be the source of any action or forbearance: And if the analogy, imperfect as it is, can be carried no further than to the human intelligence, and cannot be transferred, with any appearance of probability, to the other qualities of the mind; if this really be the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative, and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition as often as it occurs, and believe that the arguments on which it is established exceed the objections which lie against it? Some astonishment, indeed, will naturally arise from the greatness of the object; some melancholy from its obscurity; some contempt of human reason, that it can give no solution more satisfactory with regard to so extraordinary and magnificent a question. But believe me, Cleanthes, the most natural sentiment which a well-disposed mind will feel on this occasion, is a longing desire and expectation that Heaven would be pleased to dissipate, at least alleviate, this profound ignorance, by affording some more particular revelation to mankind, and making discoveries of the nature, attributes, and operations of the Divine object of our faith." *—(II. p. 547—8.)

Such being the sum total of Hume's conclusions, it cannot be said that his theological burden is a heavy one. But, if we turn from the *Natural History of Religion*, to the *Treatise*, the *Inquiry*, and the *Dialogues*, the story of what happened to the ass laden

* It is needless to quote the rest of the passage, though I cannot refrain from observing that the recommendation which it contains, that a "man of letters" should become a philosophical sceptic as "the first and most essential step towards being a sound believing Christian," though adopted and largely acted upon by many a champion of orthodoxy in these days, is questionable in taste, if it be meant as a jest, and more than questionable in morality, if it is to be taken in earnest. To pretend that you believe any doctrine for no better reason than that you doubt everything else, would be dishonest, if it were not preposterous.

with salt, who took to the water, irresistibly suggests itself. Hume's theism, such as it is, dissolves away in the dialectic river, until nothing is left but the verbal sack in which it was contained.

Of the two theistic propositions to which Hume is committed, the first is the affirmation of the existence of a God, supported by the argument from the nature of causation. In the *Dialogues*, Philo, while pushing scepticism to its utmost limit, is nevertheless made to say that—

". . . where reasonable men treat these subjects, the question can never be concerning the *Being*, but only the *Nature*, of the Deity. The former truth, as you will observe, is unquestionable and self-evident. Nothing exists without a cause, and the original cause of this universe (whatever it be) we call God, and piously ascribe to him every species of perfection."—(II. p. 439.)

The expositor of Hume, who wishes to do his work thoroughly, as far as it goes, cannot but fall into perplexity * when he contrasts this language with that of the sections of the third part of the *Treatise*, entitled, *Why a Cause is Always Necessary*, and *Of the Idea of Necessary Connexion*.

It is there shown, at large, that "every demonstration which has been produced for the necessity of a cause is fallacious and sophistical" (I. p. 111); it is affirmed that "there is no absolute nor metaphysical necessity that every beginning of existence should be attended with such an object" [as a cause] (I. p. 227); and it is roundly asserted that it is "easy for us to conceive any object to be non-existent this moment and existent the next, without conjoining to it the distinct idea of a cause or productive principle" (I. p. 111). So far from the axiom, that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of existence, being "self-evident," as Philo calls it, Hume spends the greatest care in showing that it is nothing but the product of custom or experience.

And the doubt thus forced upon one, whether Philo ought to be taken as even, so far, Hume's mouth-piece, is increased when we reflect that we are dealing with an acute reasoner; and that

* A perplexity which is increased rather than diminished by some passages in a letter to Gilbert Elliot of Minto (March 10, 1751). Hume says, "You would perceive by the sample I have given you that I make Cleanthes the hero of the dialogue; whatever you can think of, to strengthen that side of the argument, will be most acceptable to me. Any propensity you imagine I have to the other side crept in upon me against my will; and 'tis not long ago that I burned an old manuscript book, wrote before I was twenty, which contained, page after page, the gradual progress of my thoughts on this head. It began with an anxious scent after arguments to confirm the common opinion; doubts stole in, dissipated, returned; were again dissipated, returned again; and it was a perpetual struggle of a restless imagination against inclination—perhaps against reason. . . I could wish Cleanthes' argument could be so analysed as to be rendered quite formal and regular. The propensity of the mind towards it—unless that propensity were as strong and universal as that to believe in our senses and experience—will still, I am afraid, be esteemed a suspicious foundation. 'Tis here I wish for your assistance. We must endeavor to prove that this propensity is somewhat different from our inclination to find our own figures in the clouds, our faces in the moon, our passions and sentiments even in inanimate matter. Such an inclination may and ought to be controlled, and can never be a legitimate ground of assent." (Burton, *Life*, I., p. 331—3.) The picture of Hume here drawn unconsciously by his own hand, is unlike enough to the popular conception of him as a careless sceptic loving doubt for doubt's sake.

there is no difficulty in drawing the deduction from Hume's own definition of a cause, that the very phrase, a "first cause," involves a contradiction in terms. He lays down that,—

"'Tis an established axiom both in natural and moral philosophy, that an object, which exists for any time in its full perfection without producing another, is not its sole cause; but is assisted by some other principle which pushes it from its state of inactivity, and makes it exert that energy of which it was secretly possessed.'—(I. p. 106.)

Now the "first cause" is assumed to have existed from all eternity, up to the moment at which the universe came into existence. Hence it cannot be the sole cause of the universe; in fact, it was no cause at all until it was "assisted by some other principle;" consequently the so-called "first cause," so far as it produces the universe, is in reality an effect of that other principle. Moreover, though, in the person of Philo, Hume assumes the axiom "that whatever begins to exist must have a cause," which he denies in the *Treatise*, he must have seen, for a child may see, that the assumption is of no real service.

Suppose Y to be the imagined first cause and Z to be its effect. Let the letters of the alphabet, *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *f*, *g*, in their order, represent successive moments of time, and let *g* represent the particular moment at which the effect Z makes its appearance. It follows that the cause Y could not have existed "in its full perfection" during the time *a*—*e*, for if it had, then the effect Z would have come into existence during that time, which, by the hypothesis, it did not do. The cause Y, therefore, must have come into existence at *f*, and if "everything that comes into existence has a cause," Y must have had a cause X operating at *e*; X, a cause W operating at *d*; and so on *ad infinitum*.*

If the only demonstrative argument for the existence of a Deity, which Hume advances, thus, literally, "goes to water" in the solvent of his philosophy, the reasoning from the evidence of design does not fare much better. If Hume really knew of any valid reply to Philo's arguments in the following passages of the *Dialogues*, he has dealt unfairly by the reader in concealing it:—

"But because I know you are not much swayed by names and authorities, I shall endeavour to show you, a little more distinctly, the inconvenience of that Anthropomorphism which you have embraced; and shall prove that there is no ground to suppose a plan of the world to be formed in the Divine mind, consisting of distinct ideas, differently arranged, in the same manner as an architect forms in his head the plan of a house which he intends to execute.

"It is not easy, I own, to see what is gained by this supposition, whether we judge the matter by *Reason* or by *Experience*. We are still

* Kant employs substantially the same argument:—"Würde das höchste Wesen in dieser Kette der Bedingungen stehen, so würde es selbst ein Glied der Reihe derselben sein, und eben so wie die niederen Glieder, denen es vorgesetzt ist, noch fernere Untersuchungen wegen seines noch höheren Grundes erfahren."—*Kritik*. Ed. Hartenstein, p. 422.

obliged to mount higher, in order to find the cause of this cause, which you had assigned as satisfactory and conclusive.

"If *Reason* (I mean abstract reason, derived from inquiries *a priori* be not alike mute with regard to all questions concerning cause and effect, this sentence at least it will venture to pronounce: That a mental world, or universe of ideas, requires a cause as much as does a material world, or universe of objects; and, if similar in its arrangement, must require a similar cause. For what is there in this subject which should occasion a different conclusion or inference? In an abstract view, they are entirely alike; and no difficulty attends the one supposition, which is not common to both of them.

"Again, when we will needs force Experience to pronounce some sentence, even on those subjects which lie beyond her sphere, neither can she perceive any material difference in this particular between these two kinds of worlds; but finds them to be governed by similar principles and to depend upon an equal variety of causes in their operations. We have specimens in miniature of both of them. Our own mind resembles the one; a vegetable or animal body the other. Let experience, therefore, judge from these samples. Nothing seems more delicate, with regard to its causes, than thought: and as these causes never operate in two persons after the same manner, so we never find two persons who think exactly alike. Nor indeed does the same person think exactly alike at any two different periods of time. A difference of age, of the disposition of his body, of weather, of food, of company, of books, of passions; any of these particulars, or others more minute, are sufficient to alter the curious machinery of thought, and communicate to it very different movements and operations. As far as we can judge, vegetables and animal bodies are not more delicate in their motions, nor depend upon a greater variety or more curious adjustment of springs and principles.

"How, therefore, shall we satisfy ourselves concerning the cause of that Being whom you suppose the Author of Nature, or, according to your system of anthropomorphism, the ideal world in which you trace the material? Have we not the same reason to trace the ideal world into another ideal world, or new intelligent principle? But if we stop and go no farther; why go so far? Why not stop at the material world? How can we satisfy ourselves without going on *in infinitum?* And, after all, what satisfaction is there in that infinite progression? Let us remember the story of the Indian philosopher and his elephant. It was never more applicable than to the present subject. If the material world rests upon a similar ideal world, this ideal world must rest upon some other; and so on without end. It were better, therefore, never to look beyond the present material world. By supposing it to contain the principle of its order within itself, we really assert it to be God; and the sooner we arrive at that Divine Being, so much the better. When you go one step beyond the mundane system you only excite an inquisitive humour, which it is impossible ever to satisfy.

To say that the different ideas which compose the reason of the Supreme Being fall into order of themselves and by their own natures, is really to talk without any precise meaning. If it has a meaning, I would fain know why it is not as good sense to say that the parts of the material world fall into order of themselves, and by their own nature. Can the one opinion be intelligible while the other is not so?"—(II. p. 461—4.)

Cleanthes, in replying to Philo's discourse, says that it is very

easy to answer his arguments; but, as not unfrequently happens with controversialists, he mistakes a reply for an answer, when he declares that—

"The order and arrangement of nature, the curious adjustment of final causes, the plain use and intention of every part and organ; all these bespeak in the clearest language one intelligent cause or author. The heavens and the earth join in the same testimony. The whole chorus of nature raises one hymn to the praises of its Creator."—(II. p. 465.)

Though the rhetoric of Cleanthes may be admired, its irrelevancy to the point at issue must be admitted. Wandering still further into the region of declamation, he works himself into a passion:

"You alone, or almost alone, disturb this general harmony. You start abstruse doubts, cavils, and objections: You ask me what is the cause of this cause? I know not: I care not: that concerns not me. I have found a Deity; and here I stop my inquiry. Let those go further who are wiser or more enterprising."—(II. p. 466.)

In other words, O Cleanthes, reasoning having taken you as far as you want to go, you decline to advance any further; even though you fully admit that the very same reasoning forbids you to stop where you are pleased to cry halt! But this is simply forcing your reason to abdicate in favour of your caprice. It is impossible to imagine that Hume, of all men in the world, could have rested satisfied with such an act of high-treason against the sovereignty of philosophy. We may rather conclude that the last word of the discussion, which he gives to Philo, is also his own.

"If I am still to remain in utter ignorance of causes, and can absolutely give an explication of nothing, I shall never esteem it any advantage to shove off for a moment a difficulty, which, you acknowledge, must immediately, in its full force, recur upon me. Naturalists,* indeed, very justly explain particular effects by more general causes, though these general causes should remain in the end totally inexplicable; but they never surely thought it satisfactory to explain a particular effect by a particular cause, which was no more to be accounted for than the effect itself. An ideal system, arranged of itself, without a precedent design, is not a whit more explicable than a material one, which attains its order in a like manner: nor is there any more difficulty in the latter supposition than in the former."—(II. p. 466.)

It is obvious that, if Hume had been pushed, he must have admitted that his opinion concerning the existence of a God, and of a certain remote resemblance of his intellectual nature to that of man, was an hypothesis which might possess more or less probability, but was incapable on his own principles of any approach to demonstration. And to all attempts to make any practical use of

* *I. e.*, Natural philosophers.

his theism; or to prove the existence of the attributes of infinite wisdom, benevolence, justice, and the like, which are usually ascribed to the Deity, by reason, he opposes a searching critical negation.*

The object of the speech of the imaginary Epicurean in the eleventh section of the *Inquiry*, entitled *Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State*, is to invert the argument of Bishop Butler's *Analogy*.

That famous defence of theology against the *a priori* scepticism of Freethinkers of the eighteenth century, who based their arguments on the inconsistency of the revealed scheme of salvation with the attributes of the Deity, consists, essentially, by conclusively proving that, from a moral point of view, Nature is at least as reprehensible as orthodoxy. If you tell me, says Butler, in effect, that any part of revealed religion must be false because it is inconsistent with the divine attributes of justice and mercy; I beg leave to point out to you, that there are undeniable natural facts which are fully open to the same objection. Since you admit that nature is the work of God, you are forced to allow that such facts are consistent with his attributes. Therefore, you must also admit, that the parallel facts in the scheme of orthodoxy are also consistent with them, and all your arguments to the contrary fall to the ground. Q.E.D. In fact, the solid sense of Butler left the Deism of the Freethinkers not a leg to stand upon. Perhaps, however, he did not remember the wise saying that "A man seemeth right in in his own cause, but another cometh after and judgeth him." Hume's Epicurean philosopher adopts the main arguments of the *Analogy*, but unfortunately drives them home to a conclusion of which the good Bishop would hardly have approved.

"I deny a providence, you say, and supreme governor of the world, who guides the course of events, and punishes the vicious with infamy and disappointment, and rewards the virtuous with honour and success in all their undertakings. But surely I deny not the course itself of events, which lies open to every one's inquiry and examination. I acknowledge that, in the present order of things, virtue is attended with more peace of mind than vice, and meets with a more favourable reception from the world. I am sensible that, according to the past experience of mankind, friendship is the chief joy of human life, and moderation the only source of tranquillity and happiness. I never balance between the virtuous and the vicious course of life; but am sensible that, to a well-disposed mind, every advantage is on the side of the former. And what can you say more, allowing all your suppositions and reasonings? You tell me, indeed, that this disposition of things proceeds from intelligence and design. But, whatever it proceeds from, the disposition itself, on which depends our happiness and misery, and consequently our conduct and deportment in life, is still the same. It is still open for me, as well as you, to regulate my behaviour by my experience of past events. And if you affirm that, while a divine providence is allowed, and a supreme distributive justice in the universe, I ought to expect some more particular reward of the good, and punishment of the bad, beyond the ordinary course of events, I here find

* Hume's letter to Mure of Caldwell, containing a criticism of Leechman's sermon (Burton I. p. 163), bears strongly on this point.

the same fallacy which I have before endeavoured to detect. You persist in imagining, that if we grant that divine existence for which you so earnestly contend, you may safely infer consequences from it, and add something to the experienced order of nature, by arguing from the attributes which you ascribe to your gods. You seem not to remember that all your reasonings on this subject can only be drawn from effects to causes; and that every argument, deduced from causes to effects, must of necessity be a gross sophism, since it is impossible for you to know anything of the cause, but what you have antecedently not inferred, but discovered to the full, in the effect.

"But what must a philosopher think of those vain reasoners who, instead of regarding the present scene of things as the sole object of their contemplation, so far reverse the whole course of nature as to render this life merely a passage to something further; a porch which leads to a greater and vastly different building; a prologue which serves only to introduce the piece, and give it more grace and propriety? Whence, do you think, can such philosophers derive their idea of the gods? From their own conceit and imagination surely. For if they derive it from the present phenomena, it would never point to anything further, but must be exactly adjusted to them. That the divinity may *possibly* be endowed with attributes which we have never seen exerted; may be governed by principles of action which we cannot discover to be satisfied; all this will freely be allowed. But still this is mere *possibility* and hypothesis. We never have reason to *infer* any atributes or any principles of action in him, but so far as we know them to have been exerted and satisfied.

"*Are there any marks of a distributive justice in the world?* If you answer in the affirmative, I conclude that, since justice here exerts itself, it is satisfied. If you reply in the negative, I conclude that you have then no reason to ascribe justice, in our sense of it, to the gods. If you hold a medium between affirmation and negation, by saying that the justice of the gods at present exerts itself in part, but not in its full extent, I answer that you have no reason to give it any particular extent, but only as far as you see it, *at present*, exert itself."—IV. p. 164—6.)

Thus, the Freethinkers said, the attributes of the Deity being what they are, the scheme of orthodoxy is inconsistent with them; whereupon Butler gave the crushing reply: Agreeing with you as to the attributes of the Deity, nature, by its existence, proves that the things to which you object are quite consistent with them. To whom enters Hume's Epicurean with the remark: Then, as nature is our only measure of the attributes of the Deity in their practical manifestation, what warranty is there for supposing that such measure is anywhere transcended? That the "other side" of nature. if there be one, is governed on different principles from this side?

Truly on this topic silence is golden; while speech reaches not even the dignity of sounding brass or tinkling cymbal, and is but the weary clatter of an endless logomachy. One can but suspect that Hume also had reached this conviction; and that his shadowy and inconsistent theism was the expression of his desire to rest in a state of mind which distinctly excluded negation, while it included as little as possible of affirmation, respecting a problem which he felt to be hopelessly insoluble.

But, whatever might be the views of the philosopher as to the

arguments for theism, the historian could have no doubt respecting its many-shaped existence, and the great part which it has played in the world. Here, then, was a body of natural facts to be investigated scientifically, and the result of Hume's inquiries is embodied in the remarkable essay on the *Natural History of Religion.* Hume anticipated the results of modern investigation in declaring fetishism and polytheism to be the form in which savage and ignorant men naturally clothe their ideas of the unknown influences which govern their destiny; and they are polytheists rather than monotheists because,—

". . . the first ideas of religion arose, not from a contemplation of the works of nature, but from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears which actuate the human mind . . . in order to carry men's attention beyond the present course of things, or lead them into any inference concerning invisible intelligent power, they must be actuated by some passion which prompts their thought and reflection, some motive which urges their first inquiry. But what passion shall we have recourse to for explaining an effect of such mighty consequence? Not speculative curiosity merely, or the pure love of truth. That motive is too refined for such gross apprehensions, and would lead men into inquiries concerning the frame of nature, a subject too large and comprehensive for their narrow capacities. No passions, therefore, can be supposed to work on such barbarians, but the ordinary affections of human life; the anxious concern for happiness, the dread of future miscry, the terror of death, the thirst of revenge, the appetite for food, and other necessaries. Agitated by hopes and fears of this nature, especially the latter, men scrutinise, with a trembling curiosity, the course of future causes, and examine the various and contrary events of human life. And in this disordered scene, with eyes still more disordered and astonished, they see the first obscure traces of divinity."—(IV. pp. 443, 4.)

The shape assumed by these first traces of divinity is that of the shadows of men's own minds, projected out of themselves by their imaginations:—

"There is an universal tendency among mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object those qualities with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious. . . . The *unknown causes* which continually employ their thought, appearing always in the same aspect, are all apprehended to be of the same kind or species. Nor is it long before we ascribe to them thought, and reason, and passion, and sometimes even the limbs and figures of men, in order to bring them nearer to a resemblance with ourselves."—(IV. p. 446—7.)

Hume asks whether polytheism really deserves the name of theism.

"Our ancestors in Europe, before the revival of letters, believed as we do at present, that there was one supreme God, the author of nature, whose power, though in itself uncontrollable, was yet often exerted by the interposition of his angels and subordinate ministers, who executed his sacred purposes. But they also believed that all nature was full of other invisible powers: falries, goblins, elves, sprights; beings stronger and mightier than men, but much inferior to the celestial natures who surround the

throne of God. Now, suppose that any one, in these ages, had denied the existence of God and of his angels, would not his impiety justly have deserved the appellation of atheism, even though he had still allowed, by some odd capricious reasoning, that the popular stories of elves and fairies were just and well grounded? The difference, on the one hand, between such a person and a genuine theist, is infinitely greater than that, on the other, between him and one that absolutely excludes all invisible intelligent power. And it is a fallacy, merely from the casual resemblance of names, without any conformity of meaning, to rank such opposite opinions under the same denomination.

"To any one who considers justly of the matter, it will appear that the gods of the polytheists are no better than the elves and fairies of our ancestors, and merit as little as any pious worship and veneration. These pretended religionists are really a kind of superstitious atheists, and acknowledge no being that corresponds to our idea of a Deity. No first principle of mind or thought; no supreme government and administration; no divine contrivance or intention in the fabric or the world."—(IV. p. 450—51.)

The doctrine that you may call an atheist anybody whose ideas about the Deity do not correspond with your own, is so largely acted upon by persons who are certainly not of Hume's way of thinking, and probably, so far from having read him, would shudder to open any book bearing his name, except the *History of England*, that it is surprising to trace the theory of their practice to such a source.

But on thinking the matter over, this theory seems so consonant with reason, that one feels ashamed of having suspected many excellent persons of being moved by mere malice and viciousness of temper to call other folks atheists, when, after all, they have been obeying a purely intellectual sense of fitness. As Hume says, truly enough, it is a mere fallacy, because two people use the same names for things, the ideas of which are mutually exclusive, to rank such opposite opinions under the same denomination. If the Jew says that the Deity is absolute unity, and that it is sheer blasphemy to say that He ever became incarnate in the person of a man; and if the Trinitarian says that the Deity is numerically three as well as numerically one, and that it is sheer blasphemy to say that He did not so become incarnate, it is obvious enough that each must be logically held to deny the existence of the other's Deity. Therefore, that each has a scientific right to call the other an atheist; and that, if he refrains, it is only on the ground of decency and good manners, which should restrain an honourable man from employing even scientifically justifiable language, if custom has given it an abusive connotation. While one must agree with Hume, then, it is, nevertheless, to be wished that he had not set the bad example of calling polytheists "superstitious atheists." It probably did not occur to him that, by a parity of reasoning, the Unitarians might justify the application of the same language to the Ultramontanes and *vice versâ*. But, to return from a digression which may not be wholly unprofitable, Hume proceeds to show in what manner polytheism incorporated physical and moral alle-

gories, and naturally accepted hero-worship; and he sums up his views of the first stages of the evolution of theology as follows:—

"These then are the general principles of polytheism, founded in human nature, and little or nothing dependent on caprice or accident. As the *causes* which bestow happiness or misery are in general very little known and very uncertain, our anxious concern endeavours to attain a determinate idea of them: and finds no better expedient than to represent them as intelligent, voluntary agents, like ourselves, only somewhat superior in power and wisdom. The limited influence of these agents, and their proximity to human weakness, introduce the various distribution and division of their authority, and thereby give rise to allegory. The same principles naturally deify mortals, superior in power, courage, or understanding, and produce hero-worship; together with fabulous history and mythological tradition, in all its wild and unaccountable forms. And as an invisible spiritual intelligence is an object too refined for vulgar apprehension, men naturally affix it to some sensible representation; such as either the more conspicuous parts of nature, or the statues, images, and pictures, which a more refined age forms of its divinities."—(IV. p. 461.)

How did the further stage of theology, monotheism, arise out of polytheism? Hume replies, certainly not by reasonings from first causes or any sort of fine-drawn logic:—

"Even at this day, and in Europe, ask any of the vulgar why he believes in an Omnipotent Creator of the world, he will never mention the beauty of final causes, of which he is wholly ignorant: He will not hold out his hand and bid you contemplate the suppleness and variety of joints in his fingers, their bending all one way, the counterpoise which they receive from the thumb, the softness and fleshy parts of the inside of the hand, with all the other circumstances which render that member fit for the use to which it was destined. To these he has been long accustomed; and he beholds them with listlessness and unconcern. He will tell you of the sudden and unexpected death of such-a-one; the fall and bruise of such another; the excessive drought of this season; the cold and rains of another. These he ascribes to the immediate operation of Providence: And such events as, with good reasoners, are the chief difficulties in admitting a Supreme Intelligence, are with him the sole arguments for it. . . .

"We may conclude, therefore, upon the whole, that since the vulgar, in nations which have embraced the doctrine of theism, still build it upon irrational and superstitious grounds, they are never led into that opinion by any process of argument, but by a certain train of thinking, more suitable to their genius and capacity

"It may readily happen, in an idolatrous nation, that though men admit the existence of several limited deities, yet there is some one God whom, in a particular manner, they make the object of their worship and adoration. They may either suppose that, in the distribution of power and territory among the Gods, their nation was subjected to the jurisdiction of that particular deity; or, reducing heavenly objects to the model of things below, they may represent one god as the prince or supreme magistrate of the rest, who, though of the same nature, rules them with an authority like that which an earthly sovereign exerts over his subjects and vassals. Whether this god, therefore, be considered as their peculiar patron, or as the general sovereign of heaven, his votaries will endeavour, by every art, to insinuate themselves into his favour; and supposing him

to be pleased, like themselves, with praise and flattery, there is no eulogy or exaggeration which will be spared in their addresses to him. In proportion as men's fears or distresses become more urgent, they still invent new strains of adulation; and even he who outdoes his predecessor in swelling the titles of his divinity, is sure to be outdone by his successor in newer and more pompous epithets of praise. Thus they proceed, till at last they arrive at infinity itself, beyond which there is no further progress: And it is well if, in striving to get further, and to represent a magnificent simplicity, they run not into inexplicable mystery, and destroy the intelligent nature of their deity, on which alone any rational worship or adoration can be founded. While they confine themselves to the notion of a perfect being, the Creator of the world, they coincide, by chance, with the principles of reason and true philosophy; though they are guided to that notion, not by reason, of which they are in a great measure incapable, but by the adulation and fears of the most vulgar superstition.—(IV. pp. 463—6.)

"Nay, if we should suppose, what never happens, that a popular religion were found, in which it was expressly declared that nothing but morality could gain the divine favour; if an order of priests were instituted to inculcate this opinion, in daily sermons, and with all the arts of persuasion; yet so inveterate are the people's prejudices, that, for want of some other superstition, they would make the very attendance on these sermons the essentials of religion, rather than place them in virtue and good morals. The sublime prologue of Zaleucus' laws inspired not the Locrians, so far as we can learn, with any sounder notions of the measures of acceptance with the deity, than were familiar to the other Greeks."—(IV. p. 505.)

It has been remarked that Hume's writings are singularly devoid of local colour; of allusions to the scenes with which he was familiar, and to the people from whom he sprang. Yet, surely, the Lowlands of Scotland were more in his thoughts than the Zephyrean promontory, and the hard visage of John Knox peered from behind the mask of Zaleucus, when this passage left his pen. Nay, might not an acute German critic discern therein a reminiscence of that eminently Scottish institution, a "Holy Fair?" where, as Hume's young contemporary sings:—

"* * * opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals;
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs
To gie the jars and barrels
A lift that day.

"What signifies his barren shine
Of moral powers and reason?
His English style and gesture fine
Are a' clean out of season.

Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day."*

* Burns published the *Holy Fair* only ten years after Hume's death.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SOUL: THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY.

DESCARTES taught that an absolute difference of kind separates matter, as that which possesses extension, from spirit, as that which thinks. They not only have no character in common, but it is inconceivable that they should have any. On the assumption that the attributes of the two were wholly different, it appeared to be a necessary consequence that the hypothetical causes of these attributes—their respective substances—must be totally different. Notably, in the matter of divisibility, since that which has no extension cannot be divisible, it seemed that the *chose pensante*, the soul, must be an indivisible entity.

Later philosophers, accepting this notion of the soul, were naturally much perplexed to understand how, if matter and spirit had nothing in common, they could act and react on one another. All the changes of matter being modes of motion, the difficulty of understanding how a moving extended material body was to affect a thinking thing which had no dimension, was as great as that involved in solving the problem of how to hit a nominative case with a stick. Hence, the successors of Descartes either found themselves obliged, with the Occasionalists, to call in the aid of the Deity, who was supposed to be a sort of go-between betwixt matter and spirit; or they had recourse, with Leibnitz, to the doctrine of pre-established harmony, which denies any influence of the body on the soul, or *vice versâ*, and compared matter and spirit to two clocks so accurately regulated to keep time with one another, that the one struck whenever the other pointed to the hour; or, with Berkeley, they abolished the "substance" of matter altogether, as a superfluity, though they failed to see that the same arguments equally justified the abolition of soul as another superfluity, and the reduction of the universe to a series of events or phenomena; or, finally, with Spinoza, to whom Berkeley makes a perilously close approach, they asserted the existence of only one substance, with two chief attributes, the one thought, and the other extension.

There remained only one possible position, which, had it been taken up earlier, might have saved an immensity of trouble; and that was to affirm that we do not, and cannot, know anything about the "substance" either of the thinking thing or of the extended

thing. And Hume's sound common sense led him to defend this thesis, which Locke had already foreshadowed, with respect to the question of the substance of the soul. Hume enunciates two opinions. The first is that the question itself is unintelligible, and therefore cannot receive any answer; the second is that the popular doctrine respecting the immateriality, simplicity, and indivisibility of a thinking substance is a "true atheism, and will serve to justify all those sentiments for which Spinoza is so universally infamous."

In support of the first opinion, Hume points out that it is impossible to attach any definite meaning to the word "substance" when employed for the hypothetical substratum of soul and matter. For if we define substance as that which may exist by itself, the definition does not distinguish the soul from perceptions. It is perfectly easy to conceive that states of consciousness are self-subsistent. And, if the substance of the soul is defined as that in which perceptions inhere, what is meant by the inherence? Is such inherence conceivable? If conceivable, what evidence is there of it? And what is the use of a substratum to things which, for anything we know to the contrary, are capable of existing by themselves?

Moreover, it may be added, supposing the soul has a substance, how do we know that it is different from the substance, which, on like grounds, must be supposed to underlie the qualities of matter?

Again, if it be said that our personal identity requires the assumption of a substance which remains the same while the accidents of perception shift and change, the question arises what is meant by personal identity?

"For my part," says Hume, "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of *myself*, and may be truly said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, and I could neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate, after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a perfect nonentity. If any one, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of *himself*, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may perhaps perceive something simple and continued which he calls *himself*, though I am certain there is no such principle in me.

"But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed one another with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. . . . The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance, pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no *simplicity* in it at one

time, nor *identity* in different, whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented, or of the materials of which it is composed.

"What then gives so great a propension to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose ourselves possessed of an invariable and uninterrupted existence through the whole course of our lives? In order to answer this question, we must distinguish between personal identity as it regards our thought and imagination, and as it regards our passions, or the concern we take in ourselves. The first is our present subject; and to explain it perfectly we must take the matter pretty deep, and account for that identity which we attribute to plants and animals, there being a great analogy betwixt it and the identity of a self or person." —(I. pp. 321, 322.)

Perfect identity is exhibited by an object which remains unchanged throughout a certain time; perfect diversity is seen in two or more objects which are separated by intervals of space and periods of time. But in both these cases there is no sharp line of demarcation between identity and diversity, and it is impossible to say when an object ceases to be one and becomes two.

When a sea-anemone multiplies by division, there is a time during which it is said to be one animal partially divided; but, after a while, it becomes two animals adherent together, and the limit between these conditions is purely arbitrary. So in mineralogy, a crystal of a definite chemical composition may have its substance replaced, particle by particle, by another chemical compound. When does it lose its primitive identity and become a new thing?

Again, a plant or an animal, in the course of its existence, from the condition of an egg or seed to the end of life, remains the same neither in form, nor in structure, nor in the matter of which it is composed: every attribute it possesses is constantly changing, and yet we say that it is always one and the same individual. And if, in this case, we attribute identity without supposing an indivisible immaterial something to underlie and condition that identity, why should we need the supposition in the case of that succession of changeful phenomena we call the mind?

In fact, we ascribe identity to an individual plant or animal, simply because there has been no moment of time at which we could observe any division of it into parts separated by time or space. Every experience we have of it is as one thing and not as two; and we sum up our experiences in the ascription of identity, although we know quite well that, strictly speaking, it has not been the same for any two moments.

So with the mind. Our perceptions flow in even succession; the impressions of the present moment are inextricably mixed up with the memories of yesterday and the expectations of to-morrow, and all are connected by the links of cause and effect.

". . . as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in like manner the same person

may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity. Whatever changes he endures, his several parts are still connected by the relation of causation. And in this view our identity with regard to the passions serves to corroborate that with regard to the imagination, by the making our distant perceptions influence each other, and by giving us a present concern for our past or future pains or pleasures.

"As memory alone acquaints us with the continuance and extent of this succession of perceptions, 'tis to be considered, upon that account chiefly, as the source of personal identity. Had we no memory we never should have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects which constitute our self or person. But having once acquired this notion of causation from the memory, we can extend the same chain of causes, and consequently the identity of our persons, beyond our memory, and can comprehend times, and circumstances, and actions, which we have entirely forgot, but suppose in general to have existed. For how few of our past actions are there of which we have any memory? Who can tell me, for instance, what were his thoughts and actions on the first of January, 1715, the eleventh of March, 1719, and the third of August, 1733? Or will he affirm, because he has entirely forgot the incidents of those days, that the present self is not the same person with the self of that time, and by that means overturn all the most established notions of personal identity? In this view, therefore, memory does not so much *produce* as *discover* personal identity, by showing us the relation of cause and effect among our different perceptions. 'Twill be incumbent on those who affirm that memory produces entirely our personal identity, to give a reason why we can thus extend our identity beyond our memory.

"The whole of this doctrine leads us to a conclusion which is of great importance in the present affair, viz., that all the nice and subtle questions concerning personal identity can never possibly be decided, and are to be regarded rather as grammatical than as philosophical difficulties. Identity depends on the relations of ideas, and these relations produce identity by means of that easy transition they occasion. But as the relations, and the easiness of the transition may diminish by insensible degrees, we have no just standard by which we can decide any dispute concerning the time when they acquire or lose a title to the name of identity. All the disputes concerning the identity of connected objects are merely verbal, except so far as the relation of parts gives rise to some fiction or imaginary principle of union, as we have already observed.

"What I have said concerning the first origin and uncertainty of our notion of identity, as applied to the human mind, may be extended, with little or no variation, to that of *simplicity*. An object, whose different co-existent parts are bound together by a close relation, operates upon the imagination after much the same manner as one perfectly simple and undivisable, and requires not a much greater stretch of thought in order to its conception. From this similarity of operation we attribute a simplicity to it, and feign a principle of union as the support of this simplicity, and the centre of all the different parts and qualities, of the object,"—(I. pp. 331—3.)

The final result of Hume's reasoning comes to this: As we use the name of body for the sum of the phenomena which make up our corporeal existence, so we employ the name of soul for the sum of the phenomena which constitute our mental existence; and

we have no more reason, in the latter case, than in the former, to suppose that there is anything beyond the phenomena which answers to the name. In the case of the soul, as in that of the body, the idea of substance is a mere fiction of the imagination. This conclusion is nothing but a rigorous application of Berkeley's reasoning concerning matter to mind, and it is fully adopted by Kant.*

Having arrived at the conclusion that the conception of a soul, as a substantive thing, is a mere figment of the imagination; and that, whether it exists or not, we can by no possibility know anything about it, the inquiry as to the durability of the soul may seem superfluous.

Nevertheless, there is still a sense in which, even under these conditions, such an inquiry is justifiable. Leaving aside the problem of the substance of the soul, and taking the word "soul" simply as a name for the series of mental phenomena which make up an individual mind; it remains open to us to ask whether that series commenced with, or before, the series of phenomena which constitute the corresponding individual body; and whether it terminates with the end of the corporeal series, or goes on after the existence of the body has ended. And in both cases there arises the further question, whether the excess of duration of the mental series over that of the body is finite or infinite.

Hume has discussed some of these questions in the remarkable essay *On the Immortality of the Soul*, which was not published till after his death, and which seems long to have remained but little known. Nevertheless, indeed, possibly, for that reason, its influence has been manifested in unexpected quarters, and its main arguments have been abduced by archiepiscopal and episcopal authority in evidence of the value of revelation. Dr. Whately,† sometime Archbishop of Dublin, paraphrases Hume, though he forgets to cite him; and Bishop Courtenay's elaborate work,‡ dedicated to the Archbishop, is a development of that prelate's version of Hume's essay.

This little paper occupies only some ten pages, but it is not wonderful that it attracted an acute logician like Whately, for it is a model of clear and vigorous statement. The argument hardly admits of condensation, so that I must let Hume speak for himself:—

"By the mere light of reason it seems difficult to prove the immortality of the soul: the arguments for it are commonly derived either from

* "Our internal intuition shows no permanent existence, for the Ego is only the consciousness of my thinking." "There is no means whatever by which we can learn anything respecting the constitution of the soul, so far as regards the possibility of its separate existence."—*Kritik von den Paralogismen der reinen Vernunft.*

† *Essays on Some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion* (Essay I. Revelation of a Future State), by Richard Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. Fifth Edition, revised, 1846.

‡ *The Future States: their Evidences and Nature; considered on Principles Physical, Moral, and Scriptural, with the Design of showing the Value of the Gospel Revelation*, by the Right Rev. Reginald Courtenay, D.D., Lord Bishop of Kingston (Jamaica), 1857.

metaphysical topics, or moral, or physical. But in reality it is the gospel and the gospel alone, that has brought *life and immortality* to light." *

"1. Metaphysical topics suppose that the soul is immaterial, and that 'tis impossible for thought to belong to a material substance.† But just metaphysics teach us that the notion of substance is wholly confused and imperfect; and that we have no other idea of any substance, than as an aggregate of particular qualities inhering in an unknown something. Matter, therefore, and spirit, are at bottom equally unknown, and we cannot determine what qualities inhere in the one or the other. ‡ They likewise teach us that nothing can be decided *a priori* concerning any cause or effect; and that experience being the only source of our judgments of this nature, we cannot know from any other principle, whether matter, by its structure or arrangement, may not be the cause of thought. Abstract reasonings cannot decide any question of fact or existence. But admitting a spiritual substance to be dispersed throughout the universe, like the etherial fire of the Stoics, and to be the only inherent subject of thought, we have reason to conclude, from *analogy*, that nature uses it after the manner she does the other substance, *matter*. She employs it as a kind of paste or clay; modifies it into a variety of forms or existences: dissolves after a time each modification, and from its substance erects a new form. As the same material substance may successively compose the bodies of all animals, the same spiritual substance may compose their minds: Their consciousness, or that system of thought which they formed during life, may be continually dissolved by death, and nothing interests them in the new modification. The most positive assertors of the mortality of the soul never denied the immortality of its substance; and that an immaterial substance, as well as a material, may lose its memory or consciousness, appears in part from experience, if the soul be immaterial. Reasoning from the common course of nature, and without supposing any new interposition of the Supreme Cause, which ought always to be excluded from philosophy, *what is incorruptible must also be ingenerable.* The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth, and if the former existence noways concerned us, neither will the latter. Animals undoubtedly feel, think, love, hate, will, and even reason, though in a more imperfect manner than men: Are their souls also immaterial and immortal?" §

Hume next proceeds to consider the moral arguments, and chiefly

". . . those derived from the justice of God, which is supposed to be

* "Now that 'Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel,' and that in the most literal sense, which imphes that the revelation of the doctrine is *peculiar* to his Gospel, seems to be at least the most obvious meaning of the Scriptures of the New Testament."—Whately, *l. c.* p. 27.

† Compare, *Of the Immateriality of the Soul*, Section V. of Part IV., Book I., of the *Treatise*, in which Hume concludes (I. p. 319) that, whether it be material or immaterial, "in both cases the metaphysical arguments for the immortality of the soul are equally inconclusive; and in both cases the moral arguments and those derived from the analogy of nature are equally strong and convincing."

‡ The question again respecting the materialty of the soul is one which I am at a loss to understand clearly, till it shall have been clearly determined *what matter is.* We know nothing of it, any more than mind, except its attributes."—Whately, *l. c.* p. 66.

§ "None of those who contend for the natural immortality of the soul . . . . have been able to extricate themselves from one difficulty, viz. that all their arguments apply, with exactly the same force, to prove an immortality, not only of *brutes*, but even of *plants;* though in such a conclusion as this they are never willing to acquiesce."—Whately, *l. c.* p. 67.

further interested in the future punishment of the vicious and reward of the virtuous."

But if by the justice of God we mean the same attribute which we call justice in ourselves, then why should either reward or punishment be extended beyond this life? * Our sole means of knowing anything is the reasoning faculty which God has given us; and that reasoning faculty not only denies us any conception of a future state, but fails to furnish a single valid argument in favour of the belief that the mind will endure after the dissolution of the body.

". . . If any purpose of nature be clear, we may affirm that the whole scope and intention of man's creation, so far as we can judge by natural reason, is limited to the present life."

To the argument that the powers of man are so much greater than the needs of this life require, that they suggest a future scene in which they can be employed, Hume replies:—

"If the reason of man gives him great superiority above other animals, his necessities are proportionably multiplied upon him; his whole time, his whole capacity, activity, courage and passion, find sufficient employment in fencing against the miseries of his present condition; and frequently, nay, almost always, are too slender for the business assigned them. A pair of shoes, perhaps, was never yet wrought to the highest degree of perfection that commodity is capable of attaining; yet it is necessary, at least very useful, that there should be some politicians and moralists, even some geometers, poets, and philosophers, among mankind. The powers of men are no more superior to their wants, considered merely in this life, than those of foxes and hares are, compared to *their* wants and to their period of existence. The inference from parity of reason is therefore obvious."

In short, Hume argues that, if the faculties with which we are endowed are unable to discover a future state, and if the most attentive consideration of their nature serves to show that they are adapted to this life and nothing more, it is surely inconsistent with any conception of justice that we should be dealt with as if we had all along had a clear knowledge of the fact thus carefully concealed from us. What should we think of the justice of a father who gave his son every reason to suppose that a trivial fault would only be visited by a box on the ear; and then, years afterwards, put him on the rack for a week for the same fault?

Again, the suggestion arises, if God is the cause of all things, he is responsible for evil as well as for good; and it appears utterly irreconcilable with our notions of justice that he should punish an-

* "Nor are we therefore authorised to infer *a priori*, independent of Revelation, a future state of retribution, from the irregularities prevailing in the present life, since that future state does not account fully for these irregularities. It may explain, indeed, how present evil may be conducive to future good, but not why the good could not be attained without the evil; it may reconcile with our notions of the divine justice the present prosperity of the wicked, but it does not account for the existence of the wicked."—Whately, *l. c.* pp. 69, 70.

other for that which he has, in fact, done himself. Moreover, just punishment bears a proportion to the offence, while suffering which is infinite is *ipso facto* disproportionate to any finite deed.

"Why then eternal punishment for the temporary offences of so frail a creature as man? Can any one approve of Alexander's rage, who intended to exterminate a whole nation because they had seized his favourite horse Bucephalus?

"Heaven and hell suppose two distinct species of men, the good and the bad; but the greatest part of mankind float betwixt vice and virtue. Were one to go round the world with the intention of giving a good supper to the righteous and a sound drubbing to the wicked, he would frequently be embarrassed in his choice, and would find the merits and demerits of most men and women scarcely amount to the value of either." *

One can but admire the broad humanity and the insight into the springs of action manifest in this passage. *Comprendre est à moitié pardonner.* The more one knows of the real conditions which determine men's acts, the less one finds either to praise or blame. For kindly David Hume, "the damnation of one man is an infinitely greater evil in the universe than the subversion of a thousand million of kingdoms." And he would have felt with his countryman Burns, that even "auld Nickie Ben" should "hae a chance."

As against those who reason for the necessity of a future state, in order that the justice of the Deity may be satisfied, Hume's argumentation appears unanswerable. For if the justice of God resembles what we mean by justice, the bestowal of infinite happiness for finite well-doing and infinite misery for finite ill-doing, it is in no sense just. And, if the justice of God does not resemble what we mean by justice, it is an abuse of language to employ the name of justice for the attribute described by it. But, as against those who choose to argue that there is nothing in what is known to us of the attributes of the Deity inconsistent with a future state of rewards and punishments, Hume's pleadings have no force. Bishop Butler's argument that, inasmuch as the visitation of our acts by rewards and punishments takes place in this life, rewards and punishments must be consistent with the attributes of the Deity, and therefore may go on as long as the mind endures, is unanswerable. Whatever exists is, by the hypothesis, existent by the will of God; and, therefore, the pains and pleasures which exist now may go on existing for all eternity, either increasing, diminishing, or being endlessly varied in their intensity, as they are now.

It is remarkable that Hume does not refer to the sentimental

* "So reason also shows, that for man to expect to earn for himself by the practice of virtue, and claims, as his just right, an immortality of exalted happiness, is a most extravagant and groundless pretension."—Whately, *l.c.* p. 101. On the other hand, however, the Archbishop sees no unreasonableness in a man's earning for himself an immortality of intense unhappiness by the practice of vice. So that life is, naturally, a venture in which you may lose all, but can earn nothing. It may be thought somewhat hard upon mankind if they are pushed into a speculation of this sort, willy-nilly.

arguments for the immortality of the soul which are so much in vogue at the present day, and which are based upon our desire for a longer conscious existence than that which nature appears to have allotted to us. Perhaps he did not think them worth notice. For indeed it is not a little strange, that our strong desire that a certain occurrence should happen should be put forward as evidence that it will happen. If my intense desire to see the friend from whom I have parted does not bring him from the other side of the world, or take me thither; if the mother's agonised prayer that her child should live has not prevented him from dying; experience certainly affords no presumption that the strong desire to be alive after death, which we call the aspiration after immortality, is any more likely to be gratified. As Hume truly says, "All doctrines are to be suspected which are favoured by our passions;" and the doctrine, that we are immortal because we should extremely like to be so, contains the quintessence of suspiciousness.

In respect of the existence and attributes of the soul, as of those of the Deity, then, logic is powerless and reason silent. At the most we can get no further than the conclusion of Kant:—

"After we have satisfied ourselves of the vanity of all the ambitious attempts of reason to fly beyond the bounds of experience, enough remains of practical value to content us. It is true that no one may boast that he *knows* that God and a future life exist; for, if he possesses such knowledge, he is just the man for whom I have long been seeking. All knowledge (touching an object of mere reason) can be communicated, and therefore I might hope to see my own knowledge increased to this prodigious extent, by his instruction. No; our conviction in these matters is not *logical*, but *moral* certainty; and, inasmuch as it rests upon subjective grounds (of moral disposition), I must not even say, *it is* morally certain that there is a God, and so on; but, *I am* morally certain, and so on. That is to say, the belief in a God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature, that the former can no more vanish than the latter can ever be torn from me.

"The only point to be remarked here is that this act of faith of the intellect (*Vernunftglaube*) assumes the existence of moral dispositions. If we leave them aside, and suppose a mind quite indifferent to moral laws, the inquiry started by reason becomes merely a subject for speculation; and [the conclusion attained] may then indeed be supported by strong arguments from analogy, but not by such as are competent to overcome persistent scepticism.

"There is no one, however, who can fail to be interested in these questions. For, although he may be excluded from moral influences by the want of a good disposition, yet, even in this case, enough remains to lead him to fear a divine existence and a future state. To this end, no more is necessary than that he can at least have no certainty that there is no such being, and no future life; for, to make this conclusion demonstratively certain, he must be able to prove the impossibility of both; and this assuredly no rational man can undertake to do. This negative belief, indeed, cannot produce either morality or good dispositions, but can operate in an analogous fashion, by powerfully repressing the outbreak of evil tendencies.

"But it will be said, is this all that Pure Reason can do when it gazes

out beyond the bounds of experience? Nothing more than two articles of faith? Common sense could achieve as much without calling the philosophers to its counsels!

"I will not here speak of the service which philosophy has rendered to human reason by the laborious efforts of its criticism, granting that the outcome proves to be merely negative: about that matter something is to be said in the following section. But do you then ask, that the knowledge which interests all men shall transcend the common understanding, and be discovered for you only by philosophers? The very thing which you make a reproach is the best confirmation of the justice of the previous conclusions, since it shows that which could not, at first, have been anticipated; namely, that in those matters which concern all men alike, nature is not guilty of distributing her gifts with partiality; and that the highest philosophy, in dealing with the most important concerns of humanity, is able to take us no further than the guidance which she affords to the commonest understanding."*

In short, nothing can be proved or disproved respecting either the distinct existence, the substance, or the durability of the soul. So far, Kant is at one with Hume. But Kant adds, as you cannot disprove the immortality of the soul, and as the belief therein is very useful for moral purposes, you may assume it. To which, had Hume lived half a century later, he would probably have replied that, if morality has no better foundation than an assumption, it is not likely to bear much strain; and, if it has a better foundation, the assumption rather weakens than strengthens it.

As has been already said, Hume is not content with denying that we know anything about the existence or the nature of the soul; but he carries the war into the enemy's camp, and accuses those who affirm the immateriality, simplicity, and indivisibility of the thinking substance, of atheism and Spinozism, which are assumed to be convertible terms.

The method of attack is ingenious. Observation appears to acquaint us with two different systems of beings, and both Spinoza and orthodox philosophers agree that that necessary substratum of each of these is a substance, in which the phenomena adhere, or of which they are attributes or modes.

"I observe first the universe of objects or of body; the sun, moon, and stars: the earth, seas, plants, animals, men, ships, houses, and other productions either of art or of nature. Here Spinoza appears, and tells me that these are only modifications, and that the subject in which they inhere is simple, uncompounded, and indivisible. After this I consider the other system of beings, viz., the universe of thought, or my impressions and ideas. Then I observe another sun, moon, and stars; an earth and seas, covered and inhabited by plants and animals, towns, houses, mountains, rivers, and, in short, everything I can discover or conceive in the first system. Upon my inquiring concerning these, theologians present themselves, and tell me that these also are modifications, and modifications of one simple, uncompounded, and indivisible substance. Immediately upon which I am deafened with the noise of a hundred voices, that treat the first hypothesis with detestation and scorn, and the second with

* *Kritik der reinen Vernunft.* Ed. Hartenstien, p. 547.

applause and veneration. I turn my attention to these hypotheses to see what may be the reason of so great a partiality; and find that they have the same fault of being unintelligible, and that, as far as we can understand them, they are so much alike, that 'tis impossible to discover any absurdity in one which is not common to both of them."—(I. p. 309.)

For the manner in which Hume makes his case good, I must refer to the original. Plain people may rest satisfied that both hypotheses are unintelligible, without plunging any further among syllogisms, the premisses of which convey no meaning, while the conclusions carry no conviction.

CHAPTER X.

VOLITION: LIBERTY AND NECESSITY.

In the opening paragraphs of the third part of the second book of the *Treatise*, Hume gives a description of the will.

"Of all the immediate effects of pain and pleasure there is none more remarkable than the *will;* and though, properly speaking, it be not comprehended among the passions, yet as the full understanding of its nature and properties is necessary to the explanation of them, we shall here make it the subject of our inquiry. I desire it may be observed, that by the *will* I mean nothing but *the internal impression we feel, and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind.* This impression, like the preceding ones of pride and humility, love and hatred, 'tis impossible to define, and needless to describe any further."—(II. p. 150.)

This description of volition may be criticised on various grounds. More especially does it seem defective in restricting the term "will" to that feeling which arises when we act, or appear to act, as causes; for one may will to strike without striking, or to think of something which we have forgotten.

Every volition is a complex idea composed of two elements: the one is the idea of an action; the other is a desire for the occurrence of that action. If I will to strike, I have an idea of a certain movement, and a desire that that movement should take place; if I will to think of any subject, or, in other words, to attend to that subject, I have an idea of the subject and a strong desire that it should remain present to my consciousness. And so far as I can discover, this combination of an idea of an object with an emotion is everything that can be directly observed in an act of volition. So that Hume's definition may be amended thus: Volition is the impression which arises when the idea of a bodily or mental action is accompanied by the desire that the action should be accomplished. It differs from other desires simply in the fact that we regard ourselves as possible causes of the action desired.

Two questions arise, in connexion with the observation of the phenomenon of volition, as they arise out of the contemplation of all other natural phenomena. Firstly, has it a cause, and, if so,

what is its cause? Secondly, is it followed by any effect, and, if so, what effect does it produce?

Hume points out, that the nature of the phenomena we consider can have nothing to do with the origin of the conception that they are connected by the relation of cause and effect. For that relation is nothing but an order of succession, which, so far as our experience goes, is invariable; and it is obvious that the nature of phenomena has nothing to do with their order. Whatever it is that leads us to seek for a cause for every event, in the case of the phenomena of the external world, compels us, with equal cogency, to seek it in that of the mind.

The only meaning of the law of causation, in the physical world, is, that it generalises universal experience of the order of that world; and if experience shows a similar order to obtain among states of consciousness, the law of causation will properly express that order.

That such an order exists, however, is acknowledged by every sane man:

"Our idea, therefore, of necessity and causation, arises entirely from the uniformity observable in the operations of nature where similar objects are constantly conjoined together, and the mind is determined by custom to infer the one from the appearance of the other. These two circumstances form the whole of that necessity which we ascribe to matter. Beyond the constant *conjunction* of similar objects and the consequent *inference* from one to the other we have no notion of any necessity of connexion.

"If it appear, therefore, what all mankind have ever allowed, without any doubt or hesitation, that these two circumstances take place in the voluntary actions of men, and in the operations of mind, it must follow that all mankind have ever agreed in the doctrine of necessity, and that they have hitherto disputed merely for not understanding each other."—(IV. p. 97.)

But is this constant conjunction observable in human actions? A student of history could give but one answer to this question:

"Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit: these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English. You cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former *most* of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with material from which we may form our observations, and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records of wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician

or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them. Nor are the earth, air, water, and other elements, examined by Aristotle and Hippocrates, more like to those which at present lie under our observation, than the men described by Polybius and Tacitus are to those who now govern the world."—(IV. pp. 97—8.)

Hume proceeds to point out that the value set upon experience in the conduct of affairs, whether of business or of politics, involves the acknowledgment that we base our expectation of what men will do upon our observation of what they have done, and that we are as firmly convinced of the fixed order of thoughts as we are of that of things. And, if it be urged that human actions not unfrequently appear unaccountable and capricious, his reply is prompt :—

"I grant it possible to find some actions which seem to have no regular connexion with any known motives, and are exceptions to all the measures of conduct which have ever been established for the government of men. But if one could willingly know what judgment should be formed of such irregular and extraordinary actions, we may consider the sentiments commonly entertained with regard to those irregular events which appear in the course of nature, and the operations of external objects. All causes are not conjoined to their usual effects with like uniformity. An artificer, who handles only dead matter, may be disappointed in his aim, as well as the politician who directs the conduct of sensible and intelligent agents.

"The vulgar, who take things according to their first appearance, attribute the uncertainty of events to such an uncertainty in the causes as make the latter often fail of their usual influence, though they meet with no impediment to their operation. But philosophers, observing that, almost in every part of nature, there is contained a vast variety of springs and principles, which are hid, by reason of their minuteness or remoteness, find that it is at least possible the contrariety of events may not proceed from any contingency in the cause, but from the secret operation of contrary causes. This possibility is converted into certainty by further observation, when they remark that, upon an exact scrutiny, a contrariety of effects always betrays a contrariety of causes, and proceeds from their mutual opposition. A peasant can give no better reason for the stopping of any clock or watch than to say it does not commonly go right. But an artist easily perceives that the same force in the spring or pendulum has always the same influence on the wheels ; but fails of its usual effect, perhaps by reason of a grain of dust, which puts a stop to the whole movement. From the observation of several parallel instances, philosophers form a maxim, that the connexion between all causes and effects is equally necessary, and that its seeming uncertainty in some instances proceeds from the secret opposition of contrary causes."—(IV. pp. 101—2.)

So with regard to human actions :—

"The internal principles and motives may operate in a uniform manner, notwithstanding these seeming irregularities ; in the same manner as the winds, rains, clouds, and other variations of the weather are supposed to be governed by steady principles ; though not easily discoverable by human sagacity and inquiry."—(IV. p. 103.)

Meteorology, as a science, was not in existence in Hume's time, or he would have left out the "supposed to be." In practice again, what difference does any one make between natural and moral evidence?

"A prisoner who has neither money nor interest, discovers the impossibility of his escape, as well when he considers the obstinacy of the gaoler, as the walls and bars with which he is surrounded; and, in all attempts for his freedom, chooses rather to work upon the stone and iron of the one, than upon the inflexible nature of the other. The same prisoner, when conducted to the scaffold, foresees his death as certainly from the constancy and fidelity of his guards, as from the operation of the axe or wheel. His mind runs along a certain train of ideas; The refusal of the soldiers to consent to his escape; the action of the executioner; the separation of the head and body; bleeding, convulsive motions, and death. Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions; but the mind feels no difference between them, in passing from one link to another, nor is less certain of the future event, than if it were connected with the objects presented to the memory or senses, by a train of causes cemented together by what we are pleased to call a *physical* necessity. The same experienced union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united objects be motives, volition, and actions, or figure and motion. We may change the names of things, but their nature and their operation on the understanding never change."—(IV. pp. 105—6.)

But, if the necessary connexion of our acts with our ideas has always been acknowledged in practice, why the proclivity of mankind to deny its words?

"If we examine the operations of body, and the production of effects from their causes, we shall find that all our faculties can never carry us further in our knowledge of this relation, than barely to observe that particular objects are *constantly conjoined* together, and that the mind is carried, by a *customary transition*, from the appearance of the one to the belief of the other. But though this conclusion concerning human ignorance be the result of the strictest scrutiny of this subject, men still entertain a strong propensity to believe, that they penetrate further into the province of nature, and perceive something like a necessary connexion between cause and effect. When, again, they turn their reflections towards the operations of their own minds, and *feel* no such connexion between the motive and the action, they are thence apt to suppose that there is a difference between the effects which result from material force, and those which arise from thought and intelligence. But, being once convinced that we know nothing of causation of any kind, than merely the *constant conjunction* of objects, and the consequent *inference* of the mind from one to another, and finding that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary actions, we may be more easily led to own the same necessity common to all causes."—(IV. pp. 107—8.)

The last asylum of the hard-pressed advocate of the doctrine of uncaused volition is usually that, argue as you like, he has a profound and ineradicable consciousness of what he calls the freedom of his will. But Hume follows him even here, though only in a

note, as if he thought the extinction of so transparent a sophism hardly worthy of the dignity of his text.

"The prevalence of the doctrine of liberty may be accounted for from another cause, viz., a false sensation, or seeming experience, which we have, or may have, of liberty or indifference in many of our actions. The necessity of any action, whether of matter or of mind, is not, properly speaking, a quality in the agent, but in any thinking or intelligent being who may consider the action; and it consists chiefly in the determination of his thoughts to infer the existence of that action from some preceding objects; as liberty, when opposed to necessity, is nothing but the want of that determination, and a certain looseness or indifference which we feel, in passing or not passing, from the idea of any object to the idea of any succeeding one. Now we may observe that though, in *reflecting* on human actions, we seldom feel such looseness or indifference, but are commonly able to infer them with considerable certainty from their motives, and from the dispositions of the agent; yet it frequently happens that in *performing* the actions themselves, we are sensible of something like it: And as all resembling objects are taken for each other, this has been employed as demonstrative and even intuitive proof of human liberty. We feel that our actions are subject to our will on most occasions; and imagine we feel that the will itself is subject to nothing, because, when by denial of it we are provoked to try, we feel that it moves easily every way, and produces an image of itself (or a *Velleity*, as it is called in the schools), even on that side on which it did not settle. This image or faint motion, we persuade ourselves, could at that time have been completed into the thing itself; because, should that be denied, we find upon a second trial that at present it can. We consider not that the fantastical desire of showing liberty is here the motive of our actions."—(IV. p. 110, *note.*)

Moreover, the moment the attempt is made to give a definite meaning to the words, the supposed opposition between free-will and necessity turns out to be a mere verbal dispute.

"For what is meant by liberty when applied to voluntary actions? We cannot surely mean that actions have so little connexion with motive, inclinations, and circumstances, that one does not follow with a certain degree of uniformity from the other, and that one affords no inference by which we can conclude the existence of the other. For these are plain and acknowledged matters of fact. By liberty, then, we can only mean *a power of acting or not acting according to the determinations of the will*; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to every one who is not a prisoner and in chains. Here, then, is no subject of dispute."—(IV. pp. 107—8.)

Half the controversies about the freedom of the will would have had no existence, if this pithy paragraph had been well pondered by those who oppose the doctrine of necessity. For they rest upon the absurd presumption that the proposition, "I can do as I like," is contradictory to the doctrine of necessity. The answer is, nobody doubts that, at any rate within certain limits, you can do as you like. But what determines your likings and dislikings? Did you make your own constitution? Is it your contrivance that one

thing is pleasant and another is painful? And even if it were, why did you prefer to make it after the one fashion rather than the other? The passionate assertion of the consciousness of their freedom, which is the favourite refuge of the opponents of the doctrine of necessity, is mere futility, for nobody denies it. What they really have to do, if they would upset the necessarian argument, is to prove that they are free to associate any emotion whatever with any idea whatever; to like pain as much as pleasure; vice as much as virtue; in short, to prove that, whatever may be the fixity of order of the universe of things, that of thought is given over to chance.

In the second part of this remarkable essay, Hume considers the real, or supposed, immoral consequences of the doctrine of necessity, premising the weighty observation that

> "When any opinion leads to absurdity, it is certainly false; but it is not certain that an opinion is false because it is of dangerous consequence." —(IV. p. 112.)

And, therefore, that the attempt to refute an opinion by a picture of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality, is as illogical as it is reprehensible.

It is said, in the first place, that necessity destroys responsibility; that, as it is usually put, we have no right to praise or blame actions that cannot be helped. Hume's reply amounts to this, that the very idea of responsibility implies the belief in the necessary connection of certain actions with certain states of the mind. A person is held responsible only for those acts which are preceded by a certain intention; and, as we cannot see, or hear, or feel, an intention, we can only reason out its existence on the principle that like effects have like causes.

If a man is found by the police busy with "jemmy" and dark lantern at a jeweller's shop door over night, the magistrate before whom he is brought the next morning, reasons from those effects to their causes in the fellow's "burglarious" ideas and volitions, with perfect confidence, and punishes him accordingly. And it is quite clear that such a proceeding would be grossly unjust, if the links of the logical process were other than necessarily connected together. The advocate who should attempt to get the man off on the plea that his client need not necessarily have had a felonious intent, would hardly waste his time more if he tried to prove that the sum of all the angles of a triangle is not two right angles, but three.

A man's moral responsibility for his acts has, in fact, nothing to do with the causation of these acts, but depends on the frame of mind which accompanies them. Common language tells us this, when it uses "well-disposed" as the equivalent of "good," and "evil-minded" as that of "wicked." If A does something which puts B in a violent passion, it is quite possible to admit that B's passion is the necessary consequence of A's act, and yet to believe that B's fury is morally wrong, or that he ought to control it. In

fact, a calm bystander would reason with both on the assumption of moral necessity. He would say to A, "You were wrong in doing a thing which you knew (that is, of the necessity of which you were convinced) would irritate B." And he would say to B, "You are wrong to give way to passion, for you know its evil effects"—that is the necessary connection between yielding to passion and evil.

So far, therefore, from necessity destroying moral responsibility, it is the foundation of all praise and blame: and moral admiration reaches its climax in the ascription of necessary goodness to the Deity.

To the statement of another consequence of the necessarian doctrine that, if there be a God, he must be the cause of all evil as well as of all good, Hume gives no real reply—probably because none is possible. But then, if this conclusion is distinctly and unquestionably deducible from the doctrine of necessity, it is no less unquestionably a direct consequence of every known form of monotheism. If God is the cause of all things, he must be the cause of evil among the rest; if he is omniscient, he must have the fore-knowledge of evil; if he is almighty, he must possess the power of preventing or of extinguishing evil. And to say that an all-knowing and an all-powerful being is not responsible for what happens, because he only permits it, is, under its intellectual aspect, a piece of childish sophistry; while, as to the moral look of it, one has only to ask any decent honourable man whether, under like circumstances, he would try to get rid of his responsibility by such a plea.

Hume's *Inquiry* appeared in 1748. He does not refer to Anthony Collins' essay on Liberty, published thirty-three years before, in which the same question is treated to the same effect, with singular force and lucidity. It may be said, perhaps, that it is not wonderful that the two freethinkers should follow the same line of reasoning; but no such theory will account for the fact that in 1754, the famous Calvinistic divine, Jonathan Edwards, President of the College of New Jersey, produced, in the interests of the straitest orthodoxy, a demonstration of the necessarian thesis, which has never been equalled in power, and certainly has never been refuted.

In the ninth section of the fourth part of Edwards' *Inquiry*, he has to deal with the Arminian objection to the Calvinistic doctrine that "it makes God the author of sin;" and it is curious to watch the struggle between the theological controversialist, striving to ward off an admission which he knows will be employed to damage his side, and the acute logician, conscious that, in some shape or other, the admission must be made. Beginning with a *tu quoque*, that the Arminian doctrine involves consequences as bad as the Calvinistic view, he proceeds to object to the term "author of sin," though he ends by admitting that, in a certain sense, it is applicable; he proves from Scripture that God is the disposer and orderer of sin; and then, by an elaborate false analogy with the darkness re-

sulting from the absence of the sun, endeavours to suggest that he is only the author of it in a negative sense; and, finally, he takes refuge in the conclusion that, though God is the orderer and disposer of those deeds which, considered in relation to their agents, are morally evil, yet, inasmuch as His purpose has all along been infinitely good, they are not evil relatively to him.

And this, of course, may be perfectly true; but if true, it is inconsistent with the attributes of omnipotence. It is conceivable that there should be no evil in the world; that which is conceivable is certainly possible; if it were possible for evil to be non-existent, the maker of the world, who, though foreknowing the existence of evil in that world, did not prevent it, either did not really desire it should not exist, or could not prevent its existence. It might be well for those who inveigh against the logical consequences of necessarianism to bethink them of the logical consequences of theism; which are not only the same when the attribute of Omniscience is ascribed to the Deity, but which bring out, from the existence of moral evil, a hopeless conflict between the attributes of Infinite Benevolence and Infinite Power, which, with no less assurance, are affirmed to appertain to the Divine Being.

Kant's mode of dealing with the doctrine of necessity is very singular. That the phenomena of the mind follow fixed relations of cause and effect is, to him, as unquestionable as it is to Hume. But then there is the *Ding an sich*, the *Noumenon*, or Kantian equivalent for the substance of the soul. This, being out of the phenomenal world, is subject to none of the laws of phenomena, and is consequently as absolutely free, and as completely powerless, as a mathematical point, *in vacuo*, would be. Hence volition is uncaused, so far as it belongs to the noumenon, but necessary so far as it takes effect in the phenomenal world.

Since Kant is never weary of telling us that we know nothing whatever, and can know nothing, about the noumenon, except as the hypothetical subject of any number of negative predicates; the information that it is free, in the sense of being out of reach of the law of causation, is about as valuable as the assertion that it is neither grey, nor blue, nor square. For practical purposes, it must be admitted that the inward possession of such a noumenal libertnei does not amount to much for people whose actual existence is made up of nothing but definitely regulated phenomena. When the good and evil angels fought for the dead body of Moses, its presence must have been of about the same value to either of the contending parties, as that of Kant's noumenon, in the battle of impulses which rages in the breast of man, Metaphysicians, as a rule, are sadly deficient in the sense of humour, or they would surely abstain from advancing propositions which, when stripped of the verbiage in which they are disguised, appear to the profane eye to be bare shams, naked but not ashamed.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS.

In his autobiography, Hume writes :—

"In the same year [1752] was published at London my *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals ;* which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, and literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world."

It may commonly be noticed that the relative value which an author ascribes to his own works rarely agrees with the estimate formed of them by his readers, who criticise the products, without either the power or the wish to take into account the pains which they may have cost the producer. Moreover, the clear and dispassionate common sense of the *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* may have tasted flat after the highly-seasoned *Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding.* Whether the public like to be deceived or not may be open to question; but it is beyond a doubt that they love to be shocked in a pleasant and mannerly way. Now Hume's speculations on moral questions are not so remote from those of respectable professors, like Hutcheson, or saintly prelates, such as Butler, as to present any striking novelty. And they support the cause of righteousness in a cool, reasonable, indeed slightly patronising fashion, eminently in harmony with the mind of the eighteenth century; which admired virtue very much, if she would only avoid the rigour which the age called fanaticism, and the fervour which it called enthusiasm.

Having applied the ordinary methods of scientific inquiry to the intellectual phenomena of the mind, it was natural that Hume should extend the same mode of investigation to its moral phenomena; and, in the true spirit of a natural philosopher, he commences by selecting a group of those states of consciousness with which every one's personal experience must have made him familiar: in the expectation that the discovery of the sources of moral approbation and disapprobation, in this comparatively easy case, may furnish the means of detecting them where they are more recondite.

"We shall analyse that complication of mental qualities which form what, in common life, we call PERSONAL MERIT: We shall consider every attribute of the mind, which renders a man an object either of esteem and affection, or of hatred and contempt; every habit or sentiment or faculty, which, if ascribed to any person, implies either praise or blame, and may enter into any panegyric or satire of his character and manners. The quick sensibility which, on this head, is so universal among mankind, gives a philosopher sufficient assurance that he can never be considerably mistaken in framing the catalogue, or incurs any danger of misplacing the object of his contemplation: He needs only enter into his own breast for a moment, and consider whether he should or should not desire to have this or that quality assigned to him, and whether such or such an imputation would proceed from a friend or an enemy. The very nature of language guides us almost infallibly in forming a judgment of this nature; and as every tongue possesses one set of words which are taken in a good sense, and another in the opposite, the least acquaintance with the idiom suffices, without any reasoning, to direct us in collecting and arranging the estimable or blamable qualities of men. The only object of reasoning is to discover the circumstances, on both sides, which are common to these qualities; to observe that particular in which the estimable qualities agree on the one hand, and the blamable on the other, and thence to reach the foundation of ethics, and find their universal principles, from which all censure or approbation is ultimately derived. As this is a question of fact, not of abstract science, we can only expect success by following the experimental method, and deducing general maxims from a comparison of particular instances. The other scientifical method, where a general abstract principle is first established, and is afterwards branched out into a variety of inferences and conclusions, may be more perfect in itself, but suits less the imperfection of human nature, and is a common source of illusion and mistake, in this as well as in other subjects. Men are now cured of their passion for hypotheses and systems in natural philosophy, and will hearken to no arguments but those which are derived from experience. It is full time they should attempt a like reformation in all moral disquisitions, and reject every system of ethics, however subtile or ingenious, which is not founded on fact and observation."—(IV. pp. 242—4.)

No qualities give a man a greater claim to personal merit than benevolence and justice; but if we inquire why benevolence deserves so much praise, the answer will certainly contain a large reference to the utility of that virtue to society; and as for justice, the very existence of the virtue implies that of society; public utility is its sole origin; and the measure of its usefulness is also the standard of its merit. If every man possessed everything he wanted, and no one had the power to interfere with such possession; or if no man desired that which could damage his fellow man, justice would have no part to play in the universe. But as Hume observes:—

"In the present disposition of the human heart, it would perhaps be difficult to find complete instances of such enlarged affections; but still we may observe that the case of families approaches towards it; and the stronger the mutual benevolence is among the individuals, the nearer it approaches, till all distinction of property be in a great measure lost and confounded among them. Between married persons, the cement of friend-

ship is by the laws supposed so strong as to abolish all division of possessions, and has often, in reality, the force assigned to it:* And it is observable that, during the ardour of new enthusiasms, when every principle is inflamed into extravagance, the community of goods has frequently been attempted; and nothing but experience of its inconveniences, from the returning or disguised selfishness of men, could make the imprudent fanatics adopt anew the ideas of justice and separate property. So true is it that this virtue derives its existence entirely from its necessary *use* to the intercourse and social state of mankind."—(IV. p. 256.)

"Were the human species so framed by nature as that each individual possessed within himself every faculty requisite both for his own preservation and for the propagation of his kind: Were all society and intercourse cut off between man and man by the primary intention of the Supreme Creator: It seems evident that so solitary a being would be as much incapable of justice as of social discourse and conversation. Where mutual regard and forbearance serve to no manner of purpose, they would never direct the conduct of any reasonable man. The headlong course of the passions would be checked by no reflection on future consequences. And as each man is here supposed to love himself alone, and to depend only on himself and his own activity for safety and happiness, he would, on every occasion, to the utmost of his power, challenge the preference above every other being, to none of which he is bound by any ties, either of nature or of interest.

"But suppose the conjunction of the sexes to be established in nature, a family immediately arises; and particular rules being found requisite for its subsistence, these are immediately embraced, though without comprehending the rest of mankind within their prescriptions. Suppose that several families unite together in one society, which is totally disjoined from all others, the rules which preserve peace and order enlarge themselves to the utmost extent of that society; but becoming then entirely useless, lose their force when carried one step further. But again, suppose that several distinct societies maintain a kind of intercourse for mutual convenience and advantage, the boundaries of justice still grow larger, in proportion to the largeness of men's views and the force of their mutual connexion. History, experience, reason, sufficiently instruct us in this natural progress of human sentiments, and in the gradual enlargement of our regard to justice in proportion as we become acquainted with the extensive utility of that virtue."—(IV. pp. 262—4.)

The moral obligation of justice and the rights of property are by no means diminished by this exposure of the purely utilitarian basis on which they rest:—

"For what stronger foundation can be desired or conceived for any duty, than to observe that human society, or even human nature, could not subsist without the establishment of it, and will still arrive at greater degrees of happiness and perfection, the more inviolable the regard is which is paid to that duty?

"The dilemma seems obvious: As justice evidently tends to promote public utility and to support civil society, the sentiments of justice is either derived from our reflecting on that tendency, or, like hunger, thirst, and

* Family affection in the eighteenth century may have been stronger than in the nineteenth; but Hume's bachelor inexperience can surely alone explain his strange account of the suppositions of the marriage law of that day, and their effects. The law certainly abolished all division of possessions, but it did so by making the husband sole proprietor.

other appetites, resentment, love of life, attachment to offspring, and other passions, arises from a simple original instinct in the human heart, which nature has implanted for like salutary purposes. If the latter be the case, it follows that property, which is the object of justice, is also distinguished by a simple original instinct, and is not ascertained by any argument or reflection. But who is there that ever heard of such an instinct? Or is this a subject in which new discoveries can be made? We may as well expect to discover in the body new senses which had before escaped the observation of all mankind."—(IV. pp. 273, 4.)

The restriction of the object of justice to property, in this passage, is singular. Pleasure and pain can hardly be included under the term property, and yet justice surely deals largely with the withholding of the former, or the infliction of the latter, by men on one another. If a man bars another from a pleasure which he would otherwise enjoy, or actively hurts him without good reason, the latter is said to be injured as much as if his property had been interfered with. Here, indeed, it may be readily shown that it is as much the interest of society that men should not interfere with one another's freedom, or mutually inflict positive or negative pain, as that they should not meddle with one another's property; and hence the obligation of justice in such matters may be deduced. But if a man merely thinks ill of another, or feels maliciously towards him without due cause, he is properly said to be unjust. In this case it would be hard to prove that any injury is done to society by the evil thought; but there is no question that it will be stigmatised as an injustice; and the offender himself, in another frame of mind, is often ready enough to admit that he has failed to be just towards his neighbour. However, it may plausibly be said that so slight a barrier lies between thought and speech, that any moral quality attached to the latter is easily transferred to the former; and that, since open slander is obviously opposed to the interests of society, injustice of thought, which is silent slander, must become inextricably associated with the same blame.

But, granting the utility to society of all kinds of benevolence and justice, why should the quality of those virtues involve the sense of moral obligation?

Hume answers this question in the fifth section, entitled, *Why Utility Pleases*. He repudiates the deduction of moral approbation from self-love, and utterly denies that we approve of benevolent or just actions because we think of the benefits which they are likely to confer indirectly on ourselves. The source of the approbation with which we view an act useful to society must be sought elsewhere; and, in fact, is to be found in that feeling which is called sympathy.

"No man is absolutely indifferent to the happiness and misery of others. The first has a natural tendency to give pleasure, the second pain. This every one may find in himself. It is not probable that these principles can be resolved into principles more simple and universal, whatever attempts may have been made for that purpose."—(IV. p. 294, *note.*)

Other men's joys and sorrows are not spectacles at which we remain unmoved :—

". . . The view of the former, whether in its causes or effects, like sun shine, or the prospect of well-cultivated plains (to carry our pretensions no higher), communicates a secret joy and satisfaction; the appearance of the latter, like a lowering cloud or barren landscape, throws a melancholy damp over the imagination. And this concession being once made, the difficulty is over ; and a natural unforced interpretation of the phenomena of human life will afterwards, we hope, prevail among all speculative inquirers."—(IV. p. 320.)

The moral approbation, therefore, with which we regard acts of justice or benevolence rests upon their utility to society, because the perception of that utility, or, in other words, of the pleasure which they give to other men, arouses a feeling of sympathetic pleasure in ourselves. The feeling of obligation to be just, or of the duty of justice, arises out of that association of moral approbation or disapprobation with one's own actions, which is what we call conscience. To fail in justice, or in benevolence, is to be displeased with oneself. But happiness is impossible without inward self-approval; and, hence, every man who has any regard to his own happiness and welfare, will find his best reward in the practice of every moral duty. On this topic Hume expends much eloquence.

"But what philosophical truths can be more advantageous to society than these here delivered, which represent virtue in all her genuine and most engaging charms, and make us approach her with ease, familiarity, and affection? The dismal dress falls off, with which many divines and some philosophers have covered her ; and nothing appears but gentleness, humanity, beneficence, affability; nay, even at proper intervals, play, frolic, and gaiety. She talks not of useless austerities and rigours, suffering and self-denial. She declares that her sole purpose is to make her votaries, and all mankind, during every period of their existence, if possible, cheerful and happy ; nor does she ever willingly part with any pleasure but in hopes of ample compensation in some other period of their lives. The sole trouble which she demands is that of just calculation, and a steady preference of the greater happiness. And if any austere pretenders approach her, enemies to joy and pleasure, she either rejects them as hypocrites and deceivers, or, if she admit them in her train, they are ranked, however, among the least favourable of her votaries.

"And, indeed, to drop all figurative expression, what hopes can we ever have of engaging mankind to a practice which we confess full of austerity and rigour? Or what theory of morals can ever serve any useful purpose, unless it can show, by a particular detail, that all the duties which it recommends are also the true interest of each individual? The peculiar advantage of the foregoing system seems to be, that it furnishes proper mediums for that purpose."—(IV. p. 360.)

In this pæan to virtue, there is more of the dance measure than will sound appropriate in the ears of most of the pilgrims who

toil painfully, not without many a stumble and many a bruise, along the rough and steep roads which lead to the higher life.

Virtue is undoubtedly beneficent; but the man is to be envied to whom her ways seem in anywise playful. And, though she may not talk much about suffering and self-denial, her silence on that topic may be accounted for on the principle *ça va sans dire.* The calculation of the greatest happiness is not performed quite so easily as a rule of three sum; while, in the hour of temptation, the question will crop up whether, as something has to be sacrificed, a bird in the hand is not worth two in the bush; whether it may not be as well to give up the problematical greater happiness in the future for a certain great happiness in the present, and

> "Buy the merry madness of one hour
> "With the long irksomeness of following time." *

If mankind cannot be engaged in practices "full of austerity and rigoua," by the love of righteousness and the fear of evil, without seeking for other compensation than that which flows from the gratification of such love and the consciousness of escape from debasement, they are in a bad case. For they will assuredly find that virtue presents no very close likeness to the sportive leader of the joyous hours in Hume's rosy picture; but that she is an awful Goddess, whose ministers are the Furies, and whose highest reward is peace.

It is not improbable that Hume would have qualified all this as enthusiasm or fanaticism, or both; but he virtually admits it:

"Now, as virtue is an end, and is desirable on its own account, without fee or reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys, it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches; some internal taste or feeling, or whatever you please to call it, which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other.

"Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: The latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution: The other has a productive faculty: and gilding and staining all natural objects with the colors borrowed from internal sentiment, raises in a manner a new creation. Reason being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination, by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery. Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action, and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition. From circumstances and relations known or supposed, the former leads us to the discovery of the concealed and unknown. After all circumstances and relations are laid before us, the latter makes us feel from the whole a new sentiment of blame or approbation. The standard of the one, being founded on the nature of things, is external and inflexible, even by the will of the Supreme Being: The standard of the other, arising from the internal frame and constitution of

* Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, act i.

animals, is ultimately derived from the Supreme Will, which bestowed on each being its peculiar nature, and arranged the several classes and orders of existence."—(IV. pp. 376—7.)

Hume has not discussed the theological theory of the obligations of morality, but it is obviously in accordance with his view of the nature of those obligations. Under its theological aspect, morality is obedience to the will of God; and the ground for such obedience is two-fold; either we ought to obey God because He will punish us if we disobey Him, which is an argument based on the utility of obedience; or our obedience ought to flow from our love towards God, which is an argument based on pure feeling, and for which no reason can be given. For if any man should say that he takes no pleasure in the contemplation of the ideal of perfect holiness, or, in other words, that he does not love God, the attempt to argue him into acquiring that pleasure would be as hopeless as the endeavour to persuade Peter Bell of the "witchery of the soft blue sky."

In which ever way we look at the matter, morality is based on feeling, not on reason; though reason alone is competent to trace out the effects of our actions, and thereby dictate conduct. Justice is founded on the love of one's neighbour; and goodness is a kind of beauty. The moral law, like the laws of physical nature, rests in the long run upon instinctive intuitions, and is neither more nor less "innate" and "necessary" than they are. Some people cannot by any means be got to understand the first book of Euclid; but the truths of mathematics are no less necessary and binding on the great mass of mankind. Some there are who cannot feel the difference between the *Sonata Appassionata* and *Cherry Ripe;* or between a gravestone-cutter's cherub and the Apollo Belvidere; but the canons of art are none the less acknowledged. While some there may be who, devoid of sympathy, are incapable of a sense of duty; but neither does their existence affect the foundations of morality. Such pathological deviations from true manhood are merely the halt, the lame, and the blind of the world of consciousness; and the anatomist of the mind leaves them aside, as the anatomist of the body would ignore abnormal specimens.

And as there are Pascals and Mozarts, Newtons and Raffaelles, in whom the innate faculty for science, or art seems to need but a touch to spring into full vigour, and through whom the human race obtains new possibilities of knowledge and new conceptions of beauty: so there have been men of moral genius, to whom we owe ideals of duty and visions of moral perfection, which ordinary mankind could never have attained; though, happily for them, they can feel the beauty of a vision, which lay beyond the reach of their dull imaginations, and court life well spent in shaping some faint image of it in the actual world.

THE END.

GIBBON

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

GIBBON'S EARLY LIFE UP TO THE TIME OF HIS LEAVING OXFORD 7

CHAPTER II.

AT LAUSANNE 17

CHAPTER III.

IN THE MILITIA 25

CHAPTER IV.

THE ITALIAN JOURNEY 33

CHAPTER V.

LITERARY SCHEMES.—THE HISTORY OF SWITZERLAND. — DISSERTATION ON THE SIXTH ÆNEID.—FATHER'S DEATH.—SETTLEMENT IN LONDON 39

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE IN LONDON.—PARLIAMENT.—THE BOARD OF TRADE.—THE DECLINE AND FALL.—MIGRATION TO LAUSANNE 45

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE.
THE FIRST THREE VOLUMES OF THE DECLINE AND FALL 59

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST TEN YEARS OF HIS LIFE AT LAUSANNE 81

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST THREE VOLUMES OF THE DECLINE AND FALL 86

CHAPTER X.

LAST ILLNESS.—DEATH.—CONCLUSION 100

GIBBON.

CHAPTER I.

GIBBON'S EARLY LIFE UP TO THE TIME OF HIS LEAVING OXFORD.

EDWARD GIBBON * was born at Putney, near London, on 27th April in the year 1737. After the reformation of the calendar his birthday became the 8th of May. He was the eldest of a family of seven children; but his five brothers and only sister all died in early infancy, and he could remember in after life his sister alone, whom he also regretted.

He is at some pains in his Memoirs to show the length and quality of his pedigree, which he traces back to the times of the Second and Third Edwards. Noting the fact, we pass on to a nearer ancestor, his grandfather, who seems to have been a person of considerable energy of character and business talent. He made a large fortune, which he lost in the South Sea Scheme, and then made another before his death. He was one of the Commissioners of Customs, and sat at the Board with the poet Prior; Bolingbroke was heard to declare that no man knew better than Mr. Edward Gibbon the commerce and finances of England. His son, the historian's father, was a person of very inferior stamp. He was educated at Westminster and Cambridge, travelled on the Continent, sat in Parliament, lived beyond his means as a country gentleman, and here his achievements came to an end. He seems to have been a kindly but a weak and impulsive man, who however had the merit of obtaining and deserving his son's affection by genial sympathy and kindly treatment.

Gibbon's childhood was passed in chronic illness, debility, and disease. All attempts to give him a regular education were frustrated by his precarious health. The longest period he ever passed at school were two years at Westminster, but he was constantly moved from one school to another. This even his delicacy can

* Gibbon's Memoirs and Letters are of such easy access that I have not deemed it necessary to encumber these pages with reference to them. Any one who wishes to control my statements will have no difficulty in doing so with the Miscellaneous Works, edited by Lord Sheffield, in his hand. Whenever I advance anything that seems to require corroboration, I have been careful to give my authority.

hardly explain, and it must have been fatal to all sustained study. Two facts he mentions of his school life, which paint the manners of the age. In the year 1746 such was the strength of party spirit that he, a child of nine years of age, "was reviled and buffeted for the sins of his Tory ancestors." Secondly, the worthy pedagogues of that day found no readier way of leading the most studious of boys to a love of science than corporal punishment. "At the expense of many tears and some blood I purchased the knowledge of the Latin syntax." Whether all love of study would have been flogged out of him if he had remained at school, it is difficult to say, but it is not an improbable supposition that this would have happened. The risk was removed by his complete failure of health. "A strange nervous affection, which alternately contracted his legs and produced, without any visible symptom, the most excruciating pain," was his chief affliction, followed by intervals of languor and debility. The saving of his life during these dangerous years Gibbon unhesitatingly ascribes to the more than maternal care of his aunt, Catherine Porten, on writing whose name for the first time in his Memoirs, "he felt a tear of gratitude trickling down his cheek." "If there be any," he continues, "as I trust there are some, who rejoice that I live, to that dear and excellent woman they must hold themselves indebted. Many anxious and solitary hours and days did she consume in the patient trial of relief and amusement; many wakeful nights did she sit by my bedside in trembling expectation that every hour would be my last." Gibbon is rather anxious to get over these details, and declares he has no wish to expatiate on a "disgusting topic." This is quite in the style of the *ancien régime*. There was no blame attached to any one for being ill in those days, but people were expected to keep their infirmities to themselves. "People knew how to live and die in those days, and kept their infirmities out of sight. You might have the gout, but you must walk about all the same without making grimaces. It was a point of good breeding to hide one's sufferings." * Similarly Walpole was much offended by a too faithful publication of Madame de Sévigné's *Letters*. "Heaven forbid," he says, "that I should say that the letters of Madame de Sévigné were bad. I only meant that they were full of family details and mortal distempers, to which the most immortal of us are subject." But Gibbon was above all things a veracious historian, and fortunately has not refrained from giving us a truthful picture of his childhood.

Of his studies, or rather his reading—his early and invincible love of reading, which he would not exchange for the treasures of India—he gives us a full account, and we notice at once the interesting fact that a considerable portion of the historical field afterwards occupied by his great work had been already gone over by Gibbon before he was well in his teens. "My indiscriminate appetite subsided by degrees into the historic line, and since philos-

* George Sand, quoted in Taine's *Ancien Régime*, p. 181.

ophy has exploded all innate ideas and natural propensities, I must ascribe the choice to the assiduous perusal of the *Universal History* as the octavo volumes successively appeared. This unequal work referred and introduced me to the Greek and Roman historians, to as many at least as were accessible to an English reader. All that I could find were greedily devoured, from Littlebury's lame *Herodotus* to Spelman's valuable *Xenophon*, to the pompous folios of Gordon's *Tacitus*, and a ragged *Procopius* of the beginning of the last century." Referring to an accident which threw the continuation of Echard's *Roman History* in his way, he says, "To me the reigns of the successors of Constantine were absolutely new, and I was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Danube, when the summons of the dinner-bell reluctantly dragged me from my intellectual feast. . . . I procured the second and third volumes of Howell's *History of the World*, which exhibit the Byzantine period on a larger scale. Mahomet and his Saracens soon fixed my attention, and some instinct of criticism directed me to the genuine sources. Simon Ockley first opened my eyes, and I was led from one book to another till I had ranged round the circle of Oriental history. Before I was sixteen I had exhausted all that could be learned in English of the Arabs and Persians, the Tartars and Turks, and the same ardor led me to guess at the French of D'Herbelot and to construe the barbarous Latin of Pocock's *Abulfaragius*." Here is in rough outline a large portion at least of the *Decline and Fall* already surveyed. The fact shows how deep was the sympathy that Gibbon had for his subject, and that there was a sort of pre-established harmony between his mind and the historical period he afterwards illustrated.

Up to the age of fourteen it seemed that Gibbon, as he says, was destined to remain through life an illiterate cripple. But as he approached his sixteenth year, a great change took place in his constitution, and his diseases, instead of growing with his growth and strengthening with his strength, wonderfully vanished. This unexpected recovery was not seized by his father in a rational spirit, as affording a welcome opportunity of repairing the defects of a hitherto imperfect education. Instead of using the occasion thus presented of recovering some of the precious time lost, of laying a sound foundation of scholarship and learning on which a superstructure at the university or elsewhere could be ultimately built, he carried the lad off in a moment of perplexity and impatience, and entered him as a gentleman commoner at Magdalen College just before he had completed his fifteenth year (1752, April 3). This was perhaps the most unwise step he could have taken under the circumstances. Gibbon was too young and too ignorant to profit by the advantages offered by Oxford to a more mature student, and his status as a gentleman commoner seemed intended to class him among the idle and dissippated who are only expected to waste their money and their time. A good education is generally considered as reflecting no small credit on its possessor; but in the majority of cases it reflects credit on the wise

solicitude of his parents or guardians rather than on himself. If Gibbon escaped the peril of being an ignorant and frivolous lounger, the merit was his own.

At no period in their history had the English universities sunk to a lower condition as places of education than at the time when Gibbon went up to Oxford. To speak of them as seats of learning seems like irony; they were seats of nothing but coarse living and clownish manners, the centres where all the faction, party spirit, and bigotry of the country were gathered to a head. In this evil pre-eminence both of the universities and all the colleges appear to have been upon a level, though Lincoln College, Oxford, is mentioned as a bright exception in John Wesley's day to the prevalent degeneracy. The strange thing is that, with all their neglect of learning and morality, the colleges were not the resorts of jovial if unseemly boon companionship; they were collections of quarrelsome and spiteful litigants, who spent their time in angry lawsuits. The indecent contentions between Bentley and the Fellows of Trinity were no isolated scandal. They are best known and remembered on account of the eminence of the chief disputants, and the melancholy waste of Bentley's genius which they occasioned. Hearne writes of Oxford in 1726, "There are such differences now in the University of Oxford (hardly one college but where all the members are busied in law business and quarrels not at all relating to the promotion of learning), that good letters decay every day, insomuch that this ordination on Trinity Sunday at Oxford there were no fewer (as I am informed) than fifteen denied orders for insufficiency, which is the more to be noted because our bishops, and those employed by them, are themselves illiterate men." * The state of things had not much improved twenty or thirty years later when Gibbon went up, but perhaps it had improved a little. He does not mention lawsuits as a favourite pastime of the Fellows. "The Fellows or monks of my time," he says, "were decent, easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder: their days were filled by a series of uniform employments—the chapel, the hall, the coffee-house, and the common room—till they retired weary and well satisfied to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, writing, or thinking they had absolved their consciences. Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business. Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal. Their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth, and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty to the House of Hanover." Some Oxonians perhaps could still partly realise the truth of this original picture by their recollections of faint and feeble copies of it drawn from their experience in youthful days. It seems to be certain that the universities, far from setting a model of good living, were really below the average of the morals and manners of the age, and the standard was not high. Such a satire as the *Terræ Filius* of Amhurst cannot be

* *Social Life at the English Universities.* By Christopher Wordsworth, p. 57.

accepted without large deductions; but the caricaturist is compelled by the conditions of his craft to aim at the *true seeming*, if he neglects the true, and with the benefit of this limitation of the *Terræ Filius* reveals a deplorable and revolting picture of vulgarity, insolence, and licence. The universities are spoken of in terms of disparagement by men of all classes. Lord Chesterfield speaks of the "rust" of Cambridge as something of which a polished man should promptly rid himself. Adam Smith showed his sense of the defects of Oxford in a stern section of the *Wealth of Nations*, written twenty years after he had left the place. Even youths like Gray and West, fresh from Eton, express themselves with contempt for their respective universities. "Consider me," says the latter, writing from Christ Church, "very seriously, here is a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves Doctors and Masters of Arts, a country flowing with syllogisms and ale; where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown." Gray, answering from Peterhouse, can only do justice to his feelings by quoting the words of the Hebrew prophet, and insists that Isaiah had Cambridge equally with Babylon in view when he spoke of the wild beasts and wild asses, of the satyrs that dance, of an inhabitation of dragons and a court for owls.

Into such untoward company was Gibbon thrust by his careless father at the age of fifteen. That he succumbed to the unwholesome atmosphere cannot surprise us. He does not conceal, perhaps he rather exaggerates, in his Memoirs, the depth of his fall. As Bunyan in a state of grace accused himself of dreadful sins which in all likelihood he never committed, so it is probable that Gibbon, in his old age, when study and learning were the only passions he knew, reflected too much severity on the boyish freaks of his university life. Moreover there appears to have been nothing coarse or unworthy in his dissipation; he was simply idle. He justly lays much of the blame on the authorities. To say that the discipline was lax would be to pay it an unmerited compliment. There was no discipline at all. He lived in Magdalen as he might have lived at the Angel or the Mitre Tavern. He not only left his college, but he left the university, whenever he liked. In one winter he made a tour to Bath, another to Buckinghamshire, and he made four excursions to London, "without once hearing the voice of admonition, without once feeling the hand of control." Of study he had just as much and as little as he pleased.

"As soon as my tutor had sounded the insufficiency of his disciple in school learning, he proposed that we should read every morning from ten to eleven the comedies of Terence. During the first weeks I constantly attended these lessons in my tutor's room; but as they appeared equally devoid of profit and pleasure, I was once tempted to try the experiment of a formal apology. The apology was accepted with a smile. I repeated the offence with less ceremony: the excuse was admitted with the same indulgence; the slightest motive of laziness or indisposition, the most trifling avocation at home or abroad was allowed as a worthy

impediment, nor did my tutor appear conscious of my absence or neglect." No wonder he spoke with indignation of such scandalous neglect. "To the University of Oxford," he says, "I acknowledge no obligation, and she will as readily renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life. The reader will pronounce between the school and the scholar." This is only just and fully merited by the abuses denounced. One appreciates the anguish of the true scholar mourning over lost time as a miser over lost gold. There was another side of the question which naturally did not occur to Gibbon, but which may properly occur to us. Did Gibbon lose as much as he thought in missing the scholastic drill of the regular public school and university man? Something he undoubtedly lost: he was never a finished scholar, up to the standard even of his own day. If he had been, is it certain that the accomplishment would have been all gain? It may be doubted. At a later period Gibbon read the classics with the free and eager curiosity of a thoughtful mind. It was a labour of love, of passionate ardour, similar to the manly zeal of the great scholars of the Renaissance. This appetite had not been blunted by enforced toil in a prescribed groove. How much of that zest for antiquity, of that keen relish for the classic writers which he afterwards acquired and retained through life, might have been quenched if he had first made their acquaintance as school-books? Above all, would he have looked on the ancient world with such freedom and originality as he afterwards gained, if he had worn through youth the harness of academical study? These questions do not suggest an answer, but they may furnish a doubt. Oxford and Cambridge for nearly a century have been turning out crowds of thorough-paced scholars of the orthodox pattern. It is odd that the two greatest historians who have been scholars as well—Gibbon and Grote—were not university-bred men.

As if to prove by experiment where the fault lay, in "the school or the scholar," Gibbon had no sooner left Oxford for the long vacation, than his taste for study returned, and, not content with reading, he attempted original composition. The subject he selected was a curious one for a youth in his sixteenth year. It was an attempt to settle the chronology of the age of Sesostris, and shows how soon the austere side of history had attracted his attention. "In my childish balance," he says, "I presumed to weigh the systems of Scaliger and Petavius, of Marsham and of Newton; and my sleep has been disturbed by the difficulty of reconciling the Septuagint with the Hebrew computation." Of course his essay had the usual value of such juvenile productions; that is, none at all, except as an indication of early bias to serious study of history. On his return to Oxford, the age of Sesostris was wisely relinquished. He indeed soon commenced a line of study which was destined to have a lasting influence on the remainder of his course through life.

He had an inborn taste for theology and the controversies which have arisen concerning religious dogma. "From my childhood," he says, "I had been fond of religious disputation: my poor aunt has often been puzzled by the mysteries which she strove to believe." How he carried the taste into mature life, his great chapters on the heresies and controversies of the Early Church are there to show. This indication for theology, co-existing with a very different temper towards religious sentiment, recalls the similar case of the author of the *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, the illustrious Pierre Bayle, whom Gibbon resembled in more ways than one. At Oxford his religious education, like everything else connected with culture, had been entirely neglected. It seems hardly credible, yet we have his word for it, that he never subscribed or studied the Articles of the Church of England, and was never confirmed. When he first went up, he was judged to be too young, but the Vice-Chancellor directed him to return as soon as he had completed his fifteenth year, recommending him in the meantime to the instruction of his college. "My college forgot to instruct; I forgot to return, and was myself forgotten by the first magistrate of the university. Without a single lecture, either public or private, either Christian or Protestant, without any academical subscription, without any episcopal ordination, I was left by light of my catechism to grope my way to the chapel and communion table, where I was admitted without question how far or by what means I might be qualified to receive the sacrament. Such almost incredible neglect was productive of the worst mischiefs" What did Gibbon mean by this last sentence? Did he, when he wrote it, towards the end of his life, regret the want of early religious instruction? Nothing leads us to think so, or to suppose that his subsequent loss of faith was a heavy grief, supported, but painful to bear. His mind was by nature positive, or even pagan, and he had nothing of what the Germans call *religiosität* in him. Still there is a passage in his Memoirs where he oddly enough laments not having selected the *fat slumbers of the Church* as an eligible profession. Did he reflect that perhaps the neglect of his religious education at Oxford had deprived him of a bishopric or a good deanery, and the learned leisure which such positions at that time conferred on those who cared for it? He could not feel that he was morally, or even spiritually, unfit for an office filled in his own time by such men as Warburton and Hurd. He would not have disgraced the episcopal bench; he would have been dignified, courteous, and hospitable; a patron and promoter of learning, we may be sure. His literary labours would probably have consisted of an edition of a Greek play or two, and certainly some treatise on the Evidences of Christianity, But in that case we should not have had the *Decline and Fall.*

The "blind activity of idleness" to which he was exposed at Oxford, prevented any result of this kind. For want of anything better to do, he was led to read Middleton's *Free Enquiry into*

the Miraculous Powers which are Supposed to have Subsisted in the Christian Church. Gibbon says that the effect of Middleton's "bold criticism" upon him was singular, and that instead of making him a sceptic, it made him more of a believer. He might have reflected that it is the commonest of occurrences for controversialists to produce exactly the opposite result to that which they intend, and that as many an apology for Christianity has sown the first seeds of infidelity, so an attack upon it might well intensify faith. What follows is very curious. "The elegance of style and freedom of argument were repelled by a shield of prejudice. I still revered the character, or rather the names of the saints and fathers whom Dr. Middleton exposes; nor could he destroy my implicit belief that the gift of miraculous powers was continued in the Church during the first four or five centuries of Christianity. But I was unable to resist the weight of historical evidence, that within the same period most of the leading doctrines of Popery were already introduced in theory and practice. Nor was my conclusion absurd that miracles are the test of truth, and that the Church must be orthodox and pure which was so often approved by the visible interposition of the Deity. The marvellous tales which are boldly attested by the Basils and Chrysostoms, the Austins and Jeromes, compelled me to embrace the superior merits of celibacy, the institution of the monastic life, the use of the sign of the cross, of holy oil, and even of images, the invocation of saints, the worship of relics, the rudiments of purgatory in prayers for the dead, and the tremendous mystery of the sacrifice of the body and the blood of Christ, which insensibly swelled into the prodigy of transubstantiation." In this remarkable passage we have a distinct foreshadow of the Tractarian movement, which came seventy or eighty years afterwards. Gibbon in 1752, at the age of fifteen, took up a position practically the same as Froude and Newman took up about the year 1830. In other words, he reached the famous *via media* at a bound. But a second spring soon carried him clear of it, into the bosom of the Church of Rome.

He had come to what are now called Church principles, by the energy of his own mind working on the scanty data furnished him by Middleton. By one of those accidents which usually happen in such cases, he made the acquaintance of a young gentleman who had already embraced Catholicism, and who was well provided with controversial tracts in favor of Romanism. Among these were the two works of Bossuet, the *Exposition of Catholic Doctrine* and the *History of the Protestant Variations.* Gibbon says: "I read, I applauded, I believed, and surely I fell by a noble hand. I have since examined the originals with a more discerning eye, and shall not hesitate to pronounce that Bossuet is indeed a master of all the weapons of controversy. In the *Exposition*, a specious apology, the orator assumes with consummate art the tone of candour and simplicity, and the ten-horned monster is transformed at his magic touch into the milk-white hind, who must be loved as soon as she is seen. In the *History*, a bold and well-aimed attack, he displays,

with a happy mixture of narrative and argument, the faults and follies, the changes and contradictions of our first Reformers, whose variations, as he dexterously contends, are the mark of historical error, while the perpetual unity of the Catholic Church is the sign and test of infallible truth. To my present feelings it seems incredible that I should ever believe that I believed in transubstantiation. But my conqueror oppressed me with the sacramental words, '*Hoc est corpus meum*,' and dashed against each other the figurative half meanings of the Protestant sects; every objection was resolved into omnipotence, and, after repeating at St. Mary's the Athanasian Creed, I humbly acquiesced in the mystery of the Real Presence."

Many reflections are suggested on the respective domains of reason and faith by these words, but they cannot be enlarged on here. No one, nowadays, one may hope, would think of making Gibbon's conversion a subject of reproach to him. The danger is rather that it should be regarded with too much honor. It unquestionably shows the early and trenchant force of his intellect: he mastered the logical position in a moment; saw the necessity of a criterion of faith; and being told that it was to be found in the practice of antiquity, boldly went there, and abided by the result. But this praise to his head does not extend to his heart. A more tender and deep moral nature would not have moved so rapidly. We must in fairness remember that it was not his fault that his religious education had been neglected at home, at school, and at college. But we have no reason to think that had it been attended to, the result would have been much otherwise. The root of spiritual life did not exist in him. It never withered, because it never shot up. Thus when he applied his acute mind to a religious problem, he contemplated it with the coolness and impariality of a geometer or chess player, his intellect operated *in vacuo* so to speak, untrammelled by any bias of sentiment or early training He had no profound associations to tear out of his heart. He merely altered the premises of a syllogism. When Catholicism was presented to him in a logical form, it met with no inward bar and repugnance. The house was empty and ready for a new guest, or rather the first guest. If Gibbon anticipated the Tractarian movement intellectually, he was farther removed than the poles are asunder from the mystic reverent spirit which inspired that movement. If we read the *Apologia* of Dr. Newman, we perceive the likeness and unlikeness of the two cases. "As a matter of simple conscience," says the latter, "I felt it to be a duty to protest against the Church of Rome." At the time he refers to Dr. Newman was a Catholic to a degree Gibbon never dreamed of. But in the one case conscience and heart-ties "strong as life, stronger almost than death," arrested the conclusions of the intellect. Ground which Gibbon dashed over in a few months or weeks, the great Tractarian took ten years to traverse. So different is the mystic from the positive mind.

Gibbon had no sooner settled his new religion than he resolved

with a frankness which did him all honor to profess it publicly. He wrote to his father, announcing his conversion, a letter which he afterwards described, when his sentiments had undergone a complete change, as written with all the pomp, dignity, and self-satisfaction of a martyr. A momentary glow of enthusiasm had raised him, as he said, above all worldly considerations. He had no difficulty, in an excursion to London, in finding a priest, who perceived in the first interview that persuasion was needless. "After sounding the motives and merits of my conversion, he consented to admit me into the pale of the Church, and at his feet on the 8th of June 1753, I solemnly, though privately, abjured the errors of heresy." He was exactly fifteen years and one month old. Further details, which one would like to have, he does not give. The scene even of the solemn act is not mentioned, nor whether he was baptized again; but this may be taken for granted.

The fact of any one "going over to Rome" is too common an occurrence nowadays to attract notice. But in the eighteenth century it was a rare and startling phenomenon. Gibbon's father, who was "neither a bigot nor a philosopher," was shocked and astonished by his "son's strange departure from the religion of his country." He divulged the secret of young Gibbon's conversion, and "the gates of Magdalen College were for ever shut" against the latter's return. They really needed no shutting at all. By the fact of his conversion to Romanism he had ceased to be a member of the University.

CHAPTER II.

AT LAUSANNE.

THE elder Gibbon showed a decision of character and prompt energy in dealing with his son's conversion to Romanism, which were by no means habitual with him. He swiftly determined to send him out of the country, far away from the influences and connections which had done such harm. Lausanne in Switzerland was the place selected for his exile, in which it was resolved he should spend some years in wholesome reflections on the error he had committed in yielding to the fascinations of Roman Catholic polemics. No time was lost: Gibbon had been received into the Church on the 8th of June, 1753, and on the 30th of the same month he had reached his destination. He was placed under the care of a M. Pavillard, a Calvinist minister, who had two duties laid upon him, a general one, to superintend the young man's studies, a particular and more urgent one, to bring him back to the Protestant faith.

It was a severe trial which Gibbon had now to undergo. He was by nature shy and retiring; he was ignorant of French; he was very young; and with these disadvantages he was thrown among entire strangers alone. After the excitement and novelty of foreign travel were over, and he could realise his position, he felt his heart sink within him. From the luxury and freedom of Oxford he was degraded to the dependence of a school-boy. Pavillard managed his expenses, and his supply of pocket-money was reduced to a small monthly allowance. "I had exchanged," he says, "my elegant apartment in Magdalen College for a narrow gloomy street, the most unfrequented in an unhandsome town, for an old inconvenient house, and for a small chamber ill contrived and ill furnished, which on the approach of winter, instead of a companionable fire, must be warmed by the dull and invisible heat of a stove." Under these gloomy auspices he began the most profitable, and after a time the most pleasant, period of his whole life, one on which he never ceased to look back with unmingled satisfaction as the starting-point of his studies and intellectual progress.

The first care of his preceptor was to bring about his religious conversion. Gibbon showed an honorable tenacity to his new faith, and a whole year after he had been exposed to the Protestant dialectics of Pavillard he still, as the latter observed with much

regret, continued to abstain from meat on Fridays. There is something slightly incongruous in the idea of Gibbon *fasting* out of religious scruples, but the fact shows that his religion had obtained no slight hold of him, and that although he had embraced it quickly, he also accepted with intrepid frankness all its consequences. His was not an intellect that could endure half measures and half lights; he did not belong to that class of persons who do not know their own minds,

However it is not surprising that his religion, placed where he was, was slowly but steadily undermined. The Swiss clergy, he says, were acute and learned on the topics of controversy, and Pavillard seems to have been a good specimen of his class. An adult and able man, in daily contact with a youth in his own house, urging persistently but with tact one side of a thesis, could hardly fail in the course of time to carry his point. But though Gibbon is willing to allow his tutor a handsome share in the work of his conversion, he maintains that it was chiefly effected by his own private reflections. And this is eminently probable. What logic had set up, logic could throw down. He gives us a highly characteristic example of the reflections in question. "I still remember my solitary transport at the discovery of a philosophical argument against the doctrine of transubstantiation: that the text of Scripture which seems to inculcate the Real Presence is attested only by a single sense—our sight; while the real presence itself is disproved by three of our senses—the sight, the touch, and the taste." He was unaware of the distinction between the logical understanding and the higher reason, which had been made since his time to the great comfort of thinkers of a certain stamp. Having reached so far, his progress was easy and rapid. "The various articles of the Romish creed disappeared like a dream, and after a full conviction, on Christmas-day, 1754, I received the sacrament in the church of Lusanne. It was here that I suspended my religious inquiries, acquiescing with implicit belief in the tenets and mysteries which are adopted by the general consent of Catholics and Protestants." He thus had been a Catholic for about eighteen months.

Gibbon's residence at Lausanne was a memorable epoch in his life on two grounds. Firstly, it was during the five years he spent there that he laid the foundations of that deep and extensive learning by which he was afterwards distinguished. Secondly, the foreign education he there received, at the critical period when the youth passes into the man, gave a permanent bent to his mind, and made him a continental European rather than an insular Englishman—two highly important factors in his intellectual growth.

He says that he went up to Oxford with a "stock of erudition which might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy might have been ashamed." Both erudition and ignorance were left pretty well undisturbed during his short and ill-starred university career. At Lausanne he found himself, for the first time, in possession of the means of successful study, good health, calm, books, and tuition, up to a certain point: that

point did not reach very far. The good Pavillard, an excellent man, for whom Gibbon ever entertained a sincere regard, was quite unequal to the task of forming such a mind. There is no evidence that he was a ripe or even a fair scholar, and the plain fact is that Gibbon belongs to the honorable band of self-taught men. "My tutor," says Gibbon, "had the good sense to discern how far he could be useful, and when he felt that I advanced beyond his speed and measure, he wisely left me to my genius." Under that good guide, once he formed an extensive plan of reviewing the Latin classics, in the four divisions of (1) Historians, (2) Poets, (3) Orators, and (4) Philosophers, in "chronological series from the days of Plautus and Sallust to the decline of the language and empire of Rome." In one year he read over the following authors: Virgil, Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Valerius Maximus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Quintus Curtius, Justin, Florus, Plautus, Terence, and Lucretius. We may take his word when he says that this review, however rapid, was neither hasty nor superficial. Gibbon had the root of all scholarship in him, the most diligent accuracy and an unlimited faculty of taking pains. But he was a great scholar, not a minute one, and belonged to the robust race of the Scaligers and the Bentleys, rather than to the smaller breed of the Elmsleys and Monks, and of course he was at no time a professed philologer, occupied chiefly with the niceties of language. The point which deserves notice in this account of his studies is their wide sweep, so superior and bracing, as compared with that narrow restriction to the "authors of the best period," patronised by teachers who imperfectly comprehend their own business. Gibbon proceeded on the common-sense principle, that if you want to obtain a real grasp of the literature, history, and genius of a people, you must master that literature with more or less completeness from end to end, and that to select arbitrarily the authors of a short period on the grounds that they are models of style, is nothing short of foolish. It was the principle on which Joseph Scaliger studied Greek, and indeed occurs spontaneously to a vigorous mind eager for real knowledge.*

Nor did he confine himself to reading: he felt that no one is sure of knowing a language who limits his study of it to the perusal of authors. He practised diligently Latin prose composition, and this in the simplest and most effectual way. "I translated an epistle of Cicero into French, and after throwing it aside till the words and phrases were obliterated from my memory, I retranslated my French into such Latin as I could find, and then compared each sentence of my imperfect version with the ease, the grace, the propriety of the Roman orator." The only odd thing in connection with this excellent method is that Gibbon in his Memoirs seems to think it was a novel discovery of his own, and would rec-

* Vix delibatis conjugationibus Græcis, Homerum cum interpretatione arreptum uno et viginti diebus totum didici. Reliquos vero poetas Græcos omnes intra quatuor menses devoravi. Neque ullum oratorem aut historicum prius attigi quam poetas omnes tenerem.—*Scaligeri Epistolæ, Lib.* 1. *Epis.* 1.

ommend it to the imitation of students, whereas it is as old as the days of Ascham at least. There is no indication that he ever in the least degree attempted Latin verse, and it is improbable that he should have done so, reading alone in Lausanne, under the slight supervision of such a teacher as Pavillard. The lack of this elegant frivolity will be less thought of now than it would some years ago. But we may admit that it would have been interesting to have a copy of hexameters or elegiacs by the historian of Rome. So much for Latin. In Greek he made far less progress. He had attained his nineteenth year before he learned the alphabet, and even after so late a beginning he did not prosecute the study with much energy.

M. Pavillard seems to have taught him little more than the rudiments. "After my tutor had left me to myself I worked my way through about half the *Iliad*, and afterwards interpreted alone a large portion of Xenophon and Herodotus. But my ardour, destitute of aid and emulation, gradually cooled, and from the barren task of searching words in a lexicon I withdrew to the free and familiar conversation of Virgil and Tacitus." This statement of the Memoirs is more than confirmed by the journal of his studies, where we find him, as late as the year 1762, when he was twenty-five years of age, painfully reading Homer, it would appear, for the first time. He read on an average about a book a week, and when he had finished the *Iliad* this is what he says: "I have so far met with the success I hoped for, that I have acquired a great facility in reading the language, and treasured up a very great stock of words. What I have rather neglected is the grammatical construction of them, and especially the many various inflections of the verbs." To repair this defect he wisely resolved to bestow some time every morning on the perusal of the Greek Grammar of Port Royal. Thus we see that at an age when many men are beginning to forget their Greek, Gibbon was beginning to learn it. Was this early deficiency ever repaired in Greek as it was in Latin? I think not. He never was at home in old Hellas as he was in old Rome. This may be inferred from the discursive notes of his great work, in which he has with admirable skill incorporated so much of his vast and miscellaneous reading. But his references to classic Greek authors are relatively few and timid compared with his mastery of the Latin. His judgments on Greek authors are also, to say the least, singular. When he had achieved the *Decline and Fall*, and was writing his Memoirs in the last years of his life, the Greek writer whom he selects for especial commendation is Xenophon. "Cicero in Latin and Xenophon in Greek are indeed the two ancients whom I would first propose to a liberal scholar, not only for the merit of their style and sentiments, but for the admirable lessons which may be applied almost to every situation of public and private life." Of the merit of Xenophon's sentiments, most people would now admit that the less said the better. The warmth of Gibbon's language with regard to Xenophon contrasts with the

coldness ne shows with regard to Plato. "I involved myself," he says, "in the philosophic maze of the writings of Plato, of which perhaps the dramatic is more interesting than the argumentative part." That Gibbon knew amply sufficient Greek for his purposes as an historian no one doubts, but his honourable candour enables us to see that he was never a Greek scholar in the proper sense of the word.

It would be greatly to misknow Gibbon to suppose that his studies at Lausanne were restricted to the learned languages. He obtained something more than an elementary knowledge of mathematics, mastered De Crousaz' *Logic* and Lock's *Essay*, and filled up his spare time with that wide and discursive reading to which his boundless curiosity was always pushing him. He was thoroughly happy and contented, and never ceased throughout his life to congratulate himself on the fortunate exile which had placed him at Lausanne. In one respect he did not use his opportunities while in Switzerland. He never climbed a mountain all the time he was there, though he lived to see in his later life the first commencement of the Alpine fever. On the other hand, as became a historian and a man of sense, the social and political aspects of the country engaged his attention, as well they might. He enjoyed access to the best society of the place, and the impression he made seems to have been as favorable as the one he received.

The influence of a foreign training is very marked in Gibbon, affecting as it does his general cast of thought, and even his style. It would be difficult to name any writer in our language, especially among the few who deserve to be compared with him, who is so un-English, not in a bad sense of the word, as implying unobjectionable qualities, but as wanting the clear insular stamp and native flavor. If an intelligent Chinese or Persian were to read his book in a French translation, he would not readily guess that it was written by an Englishman. It really bears the imprint of no nationality, and is emphatically European. We may postpone the question whether this is a merit or a defect, but it is a characteristic. The result has certainly been that he is one of the best-known of English prose writers on the Continent, and one whom foreigners most readily comprehend. This peculiarity, of which he himself was fully aware, we may agree with him in ascribing to his residence at Lausanne. At the "flexible age of sixteen he soon learned to endure, and gradually to adopt," foreign manners. French became the language in which he spontaneously thought; "his views were enlarged, and his prejudices were corrected." In one particular he cannot be complimented on the effect of his continental education, when he congratulates himself "that his taste for the French theatre had abated his idolatry for the gigantic genius of Shakespeare, which is inculcated from our infancy as the first duty of Englishmen." Still it is well to be rid of idolatry and bigotry even with regard to Shakespeare. We must remember that the insular prejudices from which Gibbon rejoiced to be free were very different in their intensity and narrowness from anything of the

kind which exists now. The mixed hatred and contempt for foreigners which prevailed in his day, were enough to excite disgust in any liberal mind.

The lucid order and admirable literary form of Gibbon's great work are qualities which can escape no observant reader. But they are qualities which are not common in English books. The French have a saying, "Les Anglais ne savent pas faire un livre." This is unjust, taken absolutely, but as a general rule it is not without foundation. It is not a question of depth or originality of thought, nor of the various merits belonging to style properly so-called. In these respects English authors need not fear competition. But in the art of clear and logical arrangement, of building up a book in such order and method that each part contributes to the general effect of the whole, we must own that we have many lessons to learn of our neighbors. Now in this quality Gibbon is a Frenchman. Not Voltaire himself is more perspicuous than Gibbon. Everything is in its place, and disposed in such apparently natural sequence that the uninitiated are apt to think the matter could not have been managed otherwise. It is a case, if there ever was one, of consummate art concealing every trace, not only of art, but even of effort. Of course the grasp and penetrating insight which are implied here, were part of Gibbon's great endowment, which only Nature could give. But it was fortunate that this genius was educated in the best school for bringing out its innate quality.

It would be difficult to explain why, except on that principle of decimation by which Macaulay accounted for the outcry against Lord Byron, Gibbon's solitary and innocent love passage has been made the theme of a good deal of malicious comment. The parties most interested, and who, we may presume, knew the circumstances better than any one else, seem to have been quite satisfied with each other's conduct. Gibbon and Mdlle. Curchod, afterwards Madame Necker, remained on terms of the *most* intimate friendship till the end of the former's life. This might be supposed sufficient. But it has not been so considered by evil tongues. The merits of the case, however, may be more conveniently discussed in a later chapter. At this point it will be enough to give the facts.

Mdlle. Susanne Curchod was born about the year 1740; her father was the Calvinist minister of Crassier, her mother a French Huguenot who had preferred her religion to her country. She had received a liberal and even learned education from her father, and was as attractive in person as she was accomplished in mind. "She was beautiful with that pure virginal beauty which depends on early youth" (Sainte-Beuve). In 1757 she was the talk of Lausanne, and could not appear in an assembly or at the play without being surrounded by admirers; she was called La Belle Curchod. Gibbon's curiosity was piqued to see such a prodigy, and he was smitten with love at first sight. "I found her" he says "learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners." He was twenty and she seventeen years of age; no impediment was placed in the way of their meeting; and

he was a frequent guest in her father's house. In fact Gibbon paid his court with an assiduity which makes an exception in his usually unromantic nature. "She listened," he says, "to the voice of truth and passion, and I might presume to hope that I had made some impression on a virtuous heart." We must remember that this and other rather glowing passages in his Memoirs were written in his old age, when he had returned to Lausanne, and when after a long separation and many vicissitudes, he and Madame Necker were again thrown together in an intimacy of friendship which revived old memories. Letters of hers to him which will be quoted in a later chapter show this in a striking light. He indulged, he says, his dream of felicity, but on his return to England he soon discovered that his father would not hear of this "strange alliance," and then follows the sentence which has lost him in the eyes of some persons. "After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate: I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son." What else he was to do under the circumstances does not appear. He was wholly dependent on his father, and on the continent at least parental authority is not regarded as a trifling impediment in such cases. Gibbon could only have married Mdlle. Curchod as an exile and a pauper, if he had openly withstood his father's wishes. "All for love" is a very pretty maxim, but it is apt to entail trouble when practically applied. Jean Jacques Rousseau, who had the most beautiful sentiments on paper, but who in real life was not always a model of self-denial, found, as we shall see, grave fault with Gibbon's conduct. Gibbon, as a plain man of rather prosaic good sense, behaved neither heroically nor meanly. Time, absence, and the scenes of a new life, which he found in England, had their usual effect; his passion vanished. "My cure," he says, "was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself, and my love subsided in friendship and esteem." The probability, indeed, that he and Mdlle. Curchod would ever see each other again, must have seemed remote in the extreme. Europe and England were involved in the Seven Years War; he was fixed at home, and an officer in the militia; Switzerland was far off: when and where were they likely to meet? They did, contrary to all expectation, meet again, and renewed terms not so much of friendship as of affection. Mdlle. Curchod, as the wife of Necker, became somewhat of a celebrity, and it is chiefly owing to these last-named circumstances that the world has ever heard of Gibbon's early love.

While he was at Lausanne Gibbon made the acquaintance of Voltaire, but it led to no intimacy or fruitful reminiscence. "He received me with civility as an English youth, but I cannot boast of any peculiar notice or distinction." Still he had "the satisfaction of hearing—an uncommon circumstance—a great poet declaim his own productions on the stage." One is often tempted, in reading Gibbon's Memoirs, to regret that he adopted the austere plan which led him "to condemn the practice of transforming a private memorial into a vehicle of satire or praise." As he truly says, "It

was assuredly in his power to amuse the reader with a gallery of portraits and a collection of anecdotes." This reserve is particularly disappointing when a striking and original figure like Voltaire passes across the field, without an attempt to add one stroke to the portraiture of such a physiognomy.

Gibbon had now (1758) been nearly five years at Lausanne, when his father suddenly intimated that he was to return home immediately. The Seven Years War was at its height, and the French had denied a passage through France to English travellers. Gibbon, or more properly his Swiss friends, thought that the alternative road through Germany might be dangerous, though it might have been assumed that the Great Frederick, so far as he was concerned, would make things as pleasant as possible to British subjects, whose country had just consented to supply him with a much needed subsidy. The French route was preferred, perhaps as much from a motive of frolic as anything else. Two Swiss officers of his acquaintance undertook to convey Gibbon from France as one of their companions, under an assumed name, and in borrowed regimentals. His complete mastery of French removed any chance of detection on the score of language, and with a "mixture of joy and regret" on the 11th April, 1758, Gibbon left Lausanne. He had a pleasant journey, but no adventures, and returned to his native land after an absence of four years, ten months, and fifteen days.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE MILITIA.

THE only person whom, on his return, Gibbon had the least wish to see was his aunt, Catherine Porten. To her house he at once hastened, and "the evening was spent in the effusions of joy and tenderness." He looked forward to his first meeting with his father with no slight anxiety, and that for two reasons. First, his father had parted from him with anger and menace, and he had no idea how he would be received now. Secondly, his mother's place was occupied by a second wife, and an involuntary but strong prejudice possessed him against his step-mother. He was most agreeably disappointed in both respects. His father "received him as a man, as a friend, all constraint was banished at our first interview, and we ever after continued on the same terms of easy and equal politeness." So far the prospect was pleasant. But the step-mother remained a possible obstacle to all comfort at home. He seems to have regarded his father's second marriage as an act of displeasure with himself, and he was disposed to hate the rival of his mother. Gibbon soon found that the injustice was in his own fancy, and the imaginary monster was an amiable and deserving woman. "I could not be mistaken in the first view of her understanding; her knowledge and the elegant spirit of her conversation, her polite welcome, and her assiduous care to study and gratify my wishes announced at least that the surface would be smooth; and my suspicions of art and falsehood were gradually dispelled by the full discovery of her warm and exquisite sensibility." He became indeed deeply attached to his step-mother. "After some reserve on my side, our minds associated in confidence and friendship, and as Mrs. Gibbon had neither children nor the hopes of children, we more easily adopted the tender names and genuine characters of mother and son." A most creditable testimony surely to the worth and amiability of both of them. The friendship thus begun continued without break or coolness to the end of Gibbon's life. Thirty-five years after his first interview with his step-mother, and only a few months before his own death, when he was old and ailing, and the least exertion, by reason of his excessive corpulence, involved pain and trouble, he made a long journey to Bath for the sole purpose of paying Mrs. Gibbon a visit. He was very far from being the selfish Epicurean that has been sometimes represented.

He had brought with him from Lausanne the first pages of a work which, after much bashfulness and delay, he at length published in the French language, under the title of *Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature*, in the year 1761, that is two years after its completion. In one respect this juvenile work of Gibbon has little merit. The style is at once poor and stilted, and the general quality of remark eminently commonplace, where it does not fall into paradox. On the other hand, it has an interesting and even original side. The main idea of the little book, so far as it has one, was excellent, and really above the general thought of the age, namely, the vindication of classical literature and history generally from the narrow and singular prejudice which prevailed against them, especially in France. When Gibbon ascribes the design of his first work to a "refinement of vanity, the desire of justifying and praising the object of a favorite pursuit," he does himself less than justice. This first utterance of his historic genius was prompted by an unconscious but deep reaction against that contempt for the past, which was the greatest blot in the speculative movement of the eighteenth century. He resists the temper of his time rather from instinct than reason, and pleads the cause of learning with the hesitation of a man who has not fully seen round his subject, or even mastered his own thoughts upon it. Still there is his protest against the proposal of D'Alembert, who recommended that after a selection of facts had been made at the end of every century the remainder should be delivered to the flames. "Let us preserve them all," he says, "most carefully. A Montesquieu will detect in the most insignificant, relations which the vulgar overlook." He resented the haughty pretensions of the mathematical sciences to universal dominion, with sufficient vigour to have satisfied Auguste Comte. "Physics and mathematics are at present on the throne. They see their sister sciences prostrate before them, chained to their chariot, or at most occupied in adorning their triumph. Perhaps their downfall is not far off." To speak of a positive downfall of exact sciences was a mistake. But we may fairly suppose that Gibbon did not contemplate anything beyond a relative change of position in the hierarchy of the sciences, by which history and politics would recover or attain to a dignity which was denied them in his day. In one passage Gibbon shows that he had dimly foreseen the possibility of the modern inquiries into the conditions of savage life and prehistoric man. "An Iroquois book, even were it full of absurdities, would be an invaluable treasure. It would offer a unique example of the nature of the human mind placed in circumstances which we have never known, and influenced by manners and religious opinions, the complete opposite of ours." In this sentence Gibbon seems to call in anticipation for the researches which have since been prosecuted with so much success by eminent writers among ourselves, not to mention similar inquirers on the Continent.

But in the meantime Gibbon had entered on a career which removed him for long months from books and study. Without

sufficiently reflecting on what such a step involved, he had joined the militia, which was embodied in the year 1760; and for the next two and a half years led as he says, a wandering life of military servitude. At first, indeed, he was so pleased with this new mode of life that he had serious thoughts of becoming a professional soldier. But this enthusiasm speedily wore off, and our "mimic Bellona soon revealed to his eyes her naked deformity." It was indeed no mere playing at soldiering that he had undertaken. He was the practical working commander of "an independent corps of 476 officers and men." "In the absence, or even in the presence of the two field officers" (one of whom was his father, the major) "I was intrusted with the effective labour of dictating the orders and exercising the battalion." And his duty did not consist in occasional drilling and reviews, but in serious marches, sometimes of thirty miles in a day, and camping under canvas. One encampment, on Winchester Downs, lasted four months. Gibbon does not hesitate to say that the superiority of his grenadiers to the detachments of the regular army, with which they were often mingled, was so striking that the most prejudiced regular could not have hesitated a moment to admit it. But the drilling, and manœuvring, and all that pertained to the serious side of militia business interested Gibbon, and though it took up time it gave him knowledge of a special kind, of which he quite appreciated the value. He was much struck, for instance, by the difference between the nominal and effective force of every regiment he had seen, even when supposed to be complete, and gravely doubts whether a nominal army of 100,000 men often brings *fifty* thousand into the field. What he found unendurable was the constant shifting of quarters, the utter want of privacy and leisure it often entailed, and the distasteful society in which he was forced to live. For eight months at a stretch he never took a book in his hand. "From the day we marched from Blandford, I had hardly a moment I could call my own, being almost continually in motion, or if I was fixed for a day, it was in the guardroom, a barrack, or an inn." Even worse were the drinking and late hours; sometimes in "rustic" company, sometimes in company in which joviality and wit were more abundant than decorum and common sense, which will surprise no one who hears that the famous John Wilkes, who was Colonel of the Buckingham militia, was not unfrequently one of his boon companions. A few extracts from his journal will be enough. "To-day (August 28, 1762), Sir Thomas Worsley," the colonel of the battalion, "came to us to dinner. Pleased to see him, we kept bumperising till after roll-calling, Sir Thomas assuring us every fresh bottle how infinitely sober he was growing." September 23rd. "Colonel Wilkes, of the Buckingham militia, dined with us, and renewed the acquaintance Sir Thomas and myself had begun with him at Reading. I scarcely ever met with a better companion; he has inexhaustible spirits, infinite wit and humour, and a great deal of knowledge . . . This proved a very debauched day; we drank a great deal both after dinner and supper; and

when at last Wilkes had retired, Sir Thomas and some others (of whom I was not one) broke into his room and made him drink a bottle of claret in bed." December 17. "We found old Captain Meard at Arlesford with the second division of the Fourteenth. He and all his officers supped with us, which made the evening rather a drunken one." Gibbon might well say that the militia was unfit for and unworthy of him.

Yet it is quite astonishing to see, as recorded in his journal, how keen an interest he still managed to retain in literature in the midst of all this dissipation, and how fertile he was of schemes and projects of future historical works to be prosecuted under more favorable auspices. Subject after subject occurred to him as eligible and attractive; he caresses the idea for a time, then lays it aside for good reasons. First, he pitched upon the expedition of Charles VIII. of France into Italy. He read and meditated upon it, and wrote a dissertation of ten folio pages, besides large notes, in which he examined the right of Charles VIII. to the crown of Naples, and the rival claims of the houses of Anjou and Aragon. In a few weeks he gives up this idea, firstly, for the rather odd reason that the subject was too remote from us; and, secondly, for the very good reason that the expedition was rather the introduction to great events than great and important in itself. He then successively chose and rejected the Crusade of Richard the First; the Barons' War against John and Henry III.; the history of Edward the Black Prince; the lives and comparisons of Henry V. and the Emperor Titus; the life of Sir Philip Sidney, and that of the Marquis of Montrose. At length he fixed on Sir Walter Raleigh as his hero. On this he worked with all the assiduity that his militia life allowed, read a great quantity of original documents relating to it, and, after some months of labor, declared that "his subject opened upon him, and in general improved upon a nearer prospect." But half a year later he "is afraid he will have to drop his hero." And he covers half a page with reasons to persuade himself that he was right in doing so. Besides the obvious one that he would be able to add little that was not already accessible in Oldys *Life of Raleigh*, that the topic was exhausted, and so forth, he goes on to make these remarks, which have more signification to us now than perhaps they had to him when he wrote them. "Could I even surmount these obstacles, I should shrink with terror from the modern history of England, where every character is a problem and every reader a friend or an enemy: when a writer is supposed to hoist a flag of party, and is devoted to damnation by the adverse faction. Such would be *my* reception at home; and abroad the historian of Raleigh must encounter an indifference far more bitter than censure or reproach. The events of his life are interesting; but his character is ambiguous; his actions are obscure; his writings are English, and his fame is confined to the narrow limits of our language and our island. *I must embrace a safer and more extensive theme.*" Here we see the first gropings after a theme of cosmopolitan

interest. He has arrived at two negative conclusions: that it must not be English, and must not be narrow. What it is to be, does not yet appear, for he has still a series of subjects to go through, to be taken up and discarded. The history of the liberty of the Swiss, which at a later period he partially achieved, was one scheme; the history of Florence under the Medici was another. He speaks with enthusiasm of both projects, adding that he will most probably fix upon the latter; but he never did anything of the kind.

These were the topics which occupied Gibbon's mind during his service in the militia, escaping when he could from the uproar and vulgarity of the camp and the guardroom to the sanctuary of the historic muse, to worship in secret. But these private devotions could not remove his disgust at "the inn, the wine, and the company" he was forced to endure, and latterly the militia became downright insupportable to him. But honorable motives kept him to his post. "From a service without danger I might have retired without disgrace; but as often as I hinted a wish of resigning, my fetters were riveted by the friendly intreaties of the colonel, the parental authority of the major, and my own regard for the welfare of the battalion." At last the long-wished-for day arrived, when the militia was disbanded. "Our two companies," he writes in his journal, "were disembodied (December 23rd, 1762), mine at Alton, my father's at Buriton. They fired three volleys, lodged the major's colors, delivered up their arms, received their money, partook of a dinner at the major's expense, and then separated, with great cheerfulness and regularity. Thus ended the militia." The compression that his spirit had endured was shown by the rapid energy with which he sought a change of scene and oblivion of his woes. Within little more than a month after the scene just described, Gibbon was in Paris beginning the grand tour.

With that keen sense of the value of time which marked him, Gibbon with great impartiality cast up and estimated the profit and loss of his "bloodless campaigns." Both have been alluded to already. He summed up with great fairness in the entry that he made in his journal on the evening of the day on which he recovered his liberty. "I am glad that the militia has been, and glad that it is no more." This judgment he confirmed thirty years afterwards, when he composed his Memoirs. "My principal obligation to the militia was the making me an Englishman and a soldier. After my foreign education, with my reserved temper, I should long have continued a stranger in my native country, had I not been shaken in this various scene of new faces and new friends; had not experience forced me to feel the characters of our leading men, the state of parties, the forms of office, the operations of our civil and military system. In this peaceful service I imbibed the rudiments of the language and science of tactics, which opened a new field of study and observation. I diligently read and meditated the *Mémoirs Militaires* of Quintus Icilius, the only writer who has united the merits of a professor and a veteran. The dis-

cipline and evolution of a modern battalion gave me a clearer notion of the phalanx and the legion, and the captain of the Hampshire grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire." No one can doubt it who compares Gibbon's numerous narratives of military operations with the ordinary performances of civil historians in those matters. The campaigns of Julian, Belisarius, and Heraclius, not to mention many others, have not only an uncommon lucidity, but also exhibit a clear appreciation of the obstacles and arduousness of warlike operations, which is rare or unknown to non-military writers. Macaulay has pointed out that Swift's party pamphlets are superior in an especial way to the ordinary productions of that class, in consequence of Swift's unavowed but very serious participation in the cabinet councils of Oxford and Bolingbroke. In the same manner Gibbon had an advantage through his military training, which gives him no small superiority to even the best historical writers who have been without it.

The course of foreign travel which Gibbon was now about to commence had been contemplated before, but the war and the militia had postponed it for nearly three years. It appears that as early as the year 1760 the elder Gibbon had conceived the project of procuring a seat in Parliament for his son, and was willing to incur the anticipated expense of £1500 for that object. Young Gibbon, who seems to have very accurately gauged his own abilities at that early age, was convinced that the money could be much better employed in another way. He wrote in consequence, under his father's roof, a letter to the latter which does such credit to his head and to his heart, that, although it is somewhat long, it cannot with propriety be omitted here.

EDWARD GIBBON TO HIS FATHER.

"Dear Sir,

"An address in writing from a person who has the pleasure of being with you every day may appear singular. However I have preferred this method, as upon paper I can speak without a blush and be heard without interruption. If my letter displeases you, impute it, dear sir, to yourself. You have treated me, not like a son, but like a friend. Can you be surprised that I should communicate to a friend all my thoughts and all my desires? Unless the friend approve them, let the father never know them; or at least let him know at the same time that however reasonable, however eligible, my scheme may appear to me, I would rather forget it for ever than cause him the slightest uneasiness.

"When I first returned to England, attentive to my future interests, you were so good as to give me hopes of a seat in Parliament. This seat, it was supposed, would be an expense of fifteen hundred pounds. This design flattered my vanity, as it might enable me to shine in so august an assembly. It flattered a nobler passion: I promised myself that, by the means of this seat, I might one day be the instrument of some good to my country. But I soon perceived how little mere virtuous inclination, unassisted by talents, could contribute towards that great end, and a very short

examination discovered to me that those talents had not fallen to my lot. Do not, dear sir, impute this declaration to a false modesty—the meanest species of pride. Whatever else I may be ignorant of, I think I know myself, and shall always endeavour to mention my good qualities without vanity and my defects without repugnance. I shall say nothing of the most intimate acquaintance with his country and language, so absolutely necessary to every senator; since they may be acquired, to allege my deficiency in them would seem only the plea of laziness. But I shall say with great truth that I never possessed that gift of speech, the first requisite of an orator, which use and labour may improve, but which nature can alone bestow; that my temper, quiet, retired, somewhat reserved, could neither acquire popularity, bear up against opposition, nor mix with ease in the crowds of public life; that even my genius (if you allow me any) is better qualified for the deliberate compositions of the closet than for the extempore discourses of Parliament. An unexpected objection would disconcert me, and as I am incapable of explaining to others what I do not understand myself, I should be meditating when I ought to be answering. I even want necessary prejudices of party and of nation. In popular assemblies it is often necessary to inspire them, and never orator inspired well a passion which he did not feel himself. Suppose me even mistaken in my own character, to set out with the repugnance such an opinion must produce offers but an indifferent prospect. But I hear you say it is not necessary that every man should enter into Parliament with such exalted hopes. It is to acquire a title the most glorious of any in a free country, and to employ the weight and consideration it gives in the service of one's friends. Such motives, though not glorious, yet are not dishonourable, and if we had a borough in our command, if you could bring me in without any great expense, or if our fortune enabled us to despise that expense, then indeed I should think them of the greatest strength. But with our private fortune, is it worth while to purchase at so high a rate a title honourable in itself, but which I must share with every fellow that can lay out 1500 pounds? Besides, dear sir, a merchandise is of little value to the owner when he is resolved not to sell it.

"I should affront your penetration did I not suppose you now see the drift of this letter. It is to appropriate to another use the sum with which you destined to bring me into Parliament; to employ it, not in making me great, but in rendering me happy. I have often heard you say yourself that the allowance you had been so indulgent as to grant me, though very liberal in regard to your estate, was yet but small when compared with the almost necessary extravagances of the age. I have indeed found it so, notwithstanding a good deal of economy, and an exemption from many of the common expenses of youth. This, dear sir, would be a way of supplying these deficiencies without any additional expense to you. But I forbear—if you think my proposals reasonable, you want no entreaties to engage you to comply with them, if otherwise all will be without effect.

"All that I am afraid of, dear sir, is that I should seem not so much asking a favour, as this really is, as exacting a debt. After all I can say, you will remain the best judge of my good and your own circumstances. Perhaps, like most landed gentlemen, an addition to my annuity would suit you better than a sum of money given at once; perhaps the sum itself may be too considerable. Whatever you may think proper to bestow on me, or in whatever manner, will be received with equal gratitude.

"I intended to stop here, but as I abhor the least appearance of art, I think it better to lay open my whole scheme at once. The unhappy war which now desolates Europe will oblige me to defer seeing France till a

peace. But that reason can have no influence on Italy, a country which every scholar must long to see. Should you grant my request, and not disapprove of my manner of employing your bounty, I would leave England this autumn and pass the winter at Lausanne with M. de Voltaire and my old friends. In the spring I would cross the Alps, and after some stay in Italy, as the war must then be terminated, return home through France, to live happily with you and my dear mother. I am now two-and-twenty; a tour must take up a considerable time; and although I believe you have no thoughts of settling me soon (and I am sure I have not), yet so many things may intervene that the man who does not travel early runs a great risk of not travelling at all. But this part of my scheme, as well as the whole of it, I submit entirely to you.

"Permit me, dear sir, to add that I do not know whether the complete compliance with my wishes could increase my love and gratitude, but that I am very sure no refusal could diminish those sentiments with which I shall always remain, dear sir, your most dutiful and obedient son and servant. E. GIBBON, JUN."

Instead of going to Italy in the autumn of 1760, as he fondly hoped when he wrote this letter, Gibbon was marching about the south of England at the head of his grenadiers. But the scheme sketched in the above letter was only postponed, and ultimately realized in every particular. The question of a seat in Parliament never came up during his father's life, and no doubt the money it would have cost was, according to his wise suggestion, devoted to defray the expenses of his foreign tour, which he is now about to begin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ITALIAN JOURNEY.

GIBBON reached Paris on the 28th January, 1763; thirty-six days, as he tells us, after the disbanding of the militia. He remained a little over three months in the French capital, which on the whole pleased him so well that he thinks that if he had been independent and rich, he might have been tempted to make it his permanent residence.

On the other hand he seems to have been little if at all aware of the extraordinary character of the society of which he became a spectator and for a time a member. He does not seem to have been conscious that he was witnessing one of the most singular social phases which have yet been presented in the history of man. And no blame attaches to him for this. No one of his contemporaries saw deeper in this direction than he did. It is a remarkable instance of the way in which the widest and deepest social movements are veiled to the eyes of those who see them, precisely because of their width and depth. Foreigners, especially Englishmen, visited Paris in the latter half of the eighteenth century and reported variously of their experience and impressions. Some, like Hume and Sterne, are delighted; some, like Gibbon, are quietly, but thoroughly pleased; some, like Walpole—though he perhaps is a class by himself—are half pleased and half disgusted. They all feel that there is something peculiar in what they witness, but never seem to suspect that nothing like it was ever seen before in the world. One is tempted to wish that they could have seen with our eyes, or, much more, that we could have had the privilege of enjoying their experience, of spending a few months in that singular epoch when "society," properly so called, the assembling of men and women in drawing-rooms for the purpose of conversation, was the most serious as well as the most delightful business of life. Talk and discussion in the senate, the market-place, and the schools are cheap; even barbarians are not wholly without them. But their refinement and concentration in the *salon*—of which the president is a woman of tact and culture—this is a phenomenon which never appeared but in Paris in the eighteenth century. And yet scholars, men of the world, men of business passed through this wonderland with eyes blindfolded. They are

free to enter, they go, they come, without a sign that they have realized the marvellous scene that they were permitted to traverse. One does not wonder that they did not perceive that in those graceful drawing-rooms, filled with stately company of elaborate manners, ideas and sentiments were discussed and evolved which would soon be more explosive than gunpowder. One does not wonder that they did not see ahead of them—men never do. One does rather wonder that they did not see what was before their eyes. But wonder is useless and a mistake. People who have never seen a volcano cannot be expected to fear the burning lava, or even to see that a volcano differs from any other mountain.

Gibbon had brought good introductions from London, but he admits that they were useless, or rather superfluous. His nationality and his *Essai* were his best recommendations. It was the day of Anglomania, and, as he says, "every Englishman was supposed to be a patriot and a philosopher." "I had rather be," said Mdlle. de Lespinasse to Lord Shelburne, "the least member of the House of Commons than even the King of Prussia." Similar things must have been said to Gibbon, but he has not recorded them; and generally it may be said that he is disappointingly dull and indifferent to Paris, though he liked it well enough when there. He never caught the Paris fever as Hume did, and Sterne, or even as Walpole did, for all the hard things he says of the underbred and overbearing manners of the philosophers. Gibbon had ready access to the well-known houses of Madame Geoffrin, Madame Helvétius, and the Baron d'Holbach; and his perfect mastery of the language must have removed every obstacle in the way of complete social intercourse. But no word in his Memoirs or Letters shows that he really saw with the eyes of the mind the singularities of that strange epoch. And yet he was there at an exciting and important moment. The Order of the Jesuits was tottering to its fall; the latter volumes of the *Encyclopedia* were being printed, and it was no secret; the coruscating wit and audacity of the *salons* were at their height. He is not unjust or prejudiced, but somewhat cold. He dines with Baron d'Holbach, and says his dinners were excellent, but nothing of the guests. He goes to Madame Geoffrin, and pronounces her house an excellent one. Such faint and commonplace praise reflects on the eulogist. The only man of letters of whom he speaks with warmth is Helvétius. He does not appear in this first visit to have known Madame du Deffand, who was still keeping her *salon* with the help of the pale deep-eyed L'Espinasse, though the final rupture was imminent. Louis Racine died, and so did Marivaux, while he was in Paris. The old Opera-house in the Palais Royal was burnt down when he had been there a little over a month, and the representations were transferred to the Salles des Machines, in the Tuileries. The equestrian statue of Louis XV. was set up in the Place to which it gave its name (where the Luxor column now stands, in the Place de la Concorde) amidst the jeers and insults of the mob, who declared it would never be got to pass the hotel of Madame de

Pompadour. How much or how little of all this touched Gibbon, we do not know. We do know one thing, that his English clothes were unfashionable and looked very foreign, the French being "excessively long-waisted." Doubtless his scanty purse could not afford a new outfit, such as Walpole two years afterwards, under the direction of Lady Hertford, promptly procured. On the 8th of May he hurried off to Lausanne.*

His ultimate object was Italy. But he wisely resolved to place a period of solid study between the lively dissipation of Paris and his classic pilgrimage. He knew the difference between seeing things he had read about and reading about things after he had seen them; how the mind, charged with associations of famous scenes, is delicately susceptible of impressions, and how rapidly old musings take form and colour, when stirred by outward realities; and contrariwise, how slow and inadequate is the effort to reverse this process, and to clothe with memories, monuments and sites over which the spirit has not sent a halo of previous meditation. So he settled down quietly at Lausanne for the space of nearly a year, and commenced a most austere and systematic course of reading on the antiquities of Italy. The list of learned works which he perused "with his pen in his hand" is formidable, and fills a quarto page. But he went further than this, and compiled an elaborate treatise on the nations, provinces, and towns of ancient Italy (which we still have) digested in alphabetical order, in which every Latin author, from Plautus to Rutilius, is laid under contribution for illustrative passages, which are all copied out in full. This laborious work was evidently Gibbon's own guide-book in his Italian travels, and one sees not only what an admirable preparation it was for the object in view, but what a promise it contained of that scrupulous thoroughness which was to be his mark as an historian. His mind was indeed rapidly maturing, and becoming conscious in what direction its strength lay.

His account of his first impressions of Rome has been often quoted, and deserves to be so again. "My temper is not very susceptible of enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm which I do not feel I have ever scorned to affect. But at the distance of twenty-five years I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the Eternal City. After a sleepless night, I trod with a lofty step the ruins of the Forum. Each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Cæsar fell, was at once present to my eye, and several days of intoxication were lost and enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute examination." He gave eighteen weeks to the study of Rome only, and six to Naples, and we may rest assured that he made good use of his time. But what makes this visit to Rome memorable in his life and in literary history is that it was the occasion and date of the first conception of his great work. "It was at Rome, on the 15th October, 1764, as I sat

* The chronicle of events which occurred during Gibbon's sojourn in Paris will be found in the interesting *Mémoires de Bachaumont*.

musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind." The scene, the contrast of the old religion and the new, the priests of Christ replacing the flamens of Jupiter, the evensong of Catholic Rome swelling like a dirge over the prostrate Pagan Rome might well concentrate in one grand luminous idea the manifold but unconnected thoughts with which his mind had so long been teeming. Gibbon had found his work, which was destined to fill the remainder of his life. Henceforth there is a fixed centre around which his thoughts and musings cluster spontaneously. Difficulties and interruptions are not wanting. The plan then formed is not taken in hand at once; on the contrary, it is contemplated at "an awful distance;" but it led him on like a star guiding his steps, till he reached his appointed goal.

After crossing the Alps on his homeward journey, Gibbon had had some thoughts of visiting the southern provinces of France. But when he reached Lyons he found letters "expressive of some impatience" for his return. Though he does not exactly say as much, we may justly conclude that the elder Gibbon's pecuniary difficulties were beginning to be oppressive. So the traveller, with dutifulness that he ever showed to his father, at once bent his steps northward. Again he passed through Paris, and the place had a new attraction in his eyes in the person of Mdlle. Curchod, now become Madame Necker, and wife of the great financier.

This perhaps will be the most convenient place to notice and estimate a certain amount of rather spiteful gossip, of which Gibbon was the subject in Switzerland about this time. Rousseau and his friend Moultou have preserved it for us, and it is probable that it has lost none of its pungency in passing through the hands of the latter. The substance of it is this:—that in the year 1763, when Gibbon revisited Lausanne, as we have seen, Susanne Curchod was still in a pitiable state of melancholy and well nigh broken-hearted at Gibbon's manifest coldness, which we know he considered to be "friendship and esteem." Whether he even saw her on this visit cannot be considered certain, but it is at least highly probable. Be that as it may: this is the picture of her condition as drawn by Moultou in a letter to Rousseau: "How sorry I am for our poor Mdlle. Curchod! Gibbon, whom she loves, and to whom I know she has sacrificed some excellent matches, has come to Lausanne, but cold, insensible, and as entirely cured of his old passion as she is far from cure. She has written me a letter that makes my heart ache." Rousseau says in reply, "He who does not appreciate Mdlle. Curchod is not worthy of her; he who appreciates her and separates himself from her is a man to be despised. She does not know what she wants. Gibbon serves her better than her own heart. I would rather a hundred times that he left her poor and free among you than that he should take her off to be rich and miserable in England." One does not quite see how Gibbon could have acted to the contentment of Jean-

Jacques. For not taking Mdlle. Curchod to England—as we may presume he would have done if he had married her—he is contemptible. Yet if he does take her he will make her miserable, and Rousseau would rather a hundred times he left her alone—precisely what he was doing; but then he was despicable for doing it. The question is whether there is not a good deal of exaggeration in all this. Only a year after the tragic condition in which Moultou describes Mdlle. Curchod she married M. Necker, and became devoted to her husband. A few months after she married Necker she cordially invited Gibbon to her house every day of his sojourn in Paris. If Gibbon had behaved in the unworthy way asserted, if she had had her feelings so profoundly touched and lacerated as Moultou declares, would she, or even could she, have acted thus? If she was conscious of being wronged, and he was conscious—as he must have been—of having acted basely, or at least unfeelingly, is it not as good as certain that both parties would have been careful to see as little of each other as possible? A broken-off love-match, even without complication of unworthy conduct on either side, is generally an effective bar to further intercourse. But in this case the intercourse is renewed on the very first opportunity, and never dropped till the death of one of the persons concerned.

Two letters have been preserved of Gibbon and Madame Necker respectively, nearly of the same date, and both referring to this rather delicate topic of their first interviews after her marriage. Gibbon writes to his friend Holroyd, "The Curchod (Madame Necker) I saw in Paris. She was very fond of me, and the husband particularly civil. Could they insult me more cruelly? Ask me every evening to supper, go to bed and leave me alone with his wife—what impertinent security! It is making an old lover of mighty little consequence. She is as handsome as ever, and much genteeler; seems pleased with her wealth rather than proud of it. I was exalting Nanette d'Illens's good luck and the fortune" (this evidently refers to some common acquaintance, who had changed her name to advantage). "'What fortune,' she said with an air of contempt:—'not above twenty thousand livres a year.' I smiled, and she caught herself immediately, 'What airs I give myself in despising twenty thousand livres a year, who a year ago looked upon eight hundred as the summit of my wishes.'"

Let us turn to the lady's account of the same scenes. "I do not know if I told you," she writes to a friend at Lausanne, "that I have seen Gibbon, and it has given me more pleasure than I know how to express. Not indeed that I retain any sentiment for a man who I think does not deserve much" (this little toss of pique or pride need not mislead us); "but my feminine vanity could not have had a more complete and honest triumph. He stayed two weeks in Paris, and I had him every day at my house; he has become soft, yielding, humble, decorous to a fault. He was a constant witness of my husband's kindness, wit, and gaiety, and made me remark for the first time, by his admiration for wealth, the opulence with which I am surrounded, and which up to this mo-

ment had only produced a disagreeable impression upon me." Considering the very different points of view of the writers, these letters are remarkably in unison. The solid fact of the daily visits is recorded in both. It is easy to gather from Madame Necker's letter that she was very glad to show Mr. Gibbon that for going farther and not marrying him she had not fared worse. The rather acid allusion to "opulence" is found in both letters; but much more pronounced in hers than in his. Each hints that the other thought too much of wealth. But he does so with delicacy, and only by implication; she charges him coarsely with vulgar admiration for it. We may reasonably suspect that riches had been the subject of not altogether smooth conversation between them, in the later part of the evening, perhaps, after M. Necker had retired in triumph to bed. One might even fancy that there was a tacit allusion by Madame Necker to the dialogue recorded by Gibbon to Holroyd, when his smile checked her indirect pride in her own wealth, and that she remembered that smile with just a touch of resentment. If so, nothing was more natural and comforting than to charge him with the failing that he had detected in her. But here are the facts. Eight months after her marriage, Madame Necker admits that she had Gibbon every day to her house. He says that she was very cordial. She would have it understood that she received him only for the sake of gratifying a feminine vanity. For her own sake one might prefer his interpretation to hers. It is difficult to believe that the essentially simple-minded Madame Necker would have asked a man every day to her house merely to triumph over him; and more difficult still to believe that a man would have gone if such had been the object. A little tartness in these first interviews, following on a relation of some ambiguity, cannot surprise one. But it was not the dominant ingredient, or the interviews must have ceased of their own accord. In any case few will admit that either of the persons concerned would have written as they did if Moultou's statement were correct. In neither epistle is there any trace of a grand passion felt or slighted. We discover the much lower level of vanity and badinage. And the subsequent relations of Gibbon and Madame Necker all tend to prove that his was the real one.

CHAPTER V.

LITERARY SCHEMES.—THE HISTORY OF SWITZERLAND.—DISSERTATION ON THE SIXTH ÆNEID.—FATHER'S DEATH.—SETTLEMENT IN LONDON.

GIBBON now (June 1765) returned to his father's house, and remained there till the latter's death in 1770. He describes these five years as having been the least pleasant and satisfactory of his whole life. The reasons were not far to seek. The unthrifty habits of the elder Gibbon were now producing their natural result. He was saddled with debt, from which two mortgages, readily consented to by his son, and the sale of the house at Putney, only partially relieved him. Gibbon now began to fear that he had an old age of poverty before him. He had pursued knowledge with single-hearted loyalty, and now became aware that from a worldly point of view knowledge is not often a profitable investment. A more dejecting discovery cannot be made by the sincere scholar. He is conscious of labor and protracted effort, which the prosperous professional man and tradesman who pass him on their road to wealth with a smile of scornful pity have never known. He has forsaken comparatively all for knowledge, and the busy world meets him with a blank stare, and surmises shrewdly that he is but an idler, with an odd taste for wasting his time over books. It says much for Gibbon's robustness of spirit that he did not break down in these trying years, that he did not weakly take fright at his prospect, and make hasty and violent efforts to mend it. On the contrary, he remained steadfast and true to the things of the mind. With diminished cheerfulness perhaps, but with no abatement of zeal, he pursued his course and his studies, thereby proving that he belonged to the select class of the strong and worthy who, penetrated with the loveliness of science, will not be turned away from it.

His first effort to redeem the time was a project of a history of Switzerland. His choice was decided by two circumstances: (1) his love for a country which he had made his own by adoption; (2) by the fact that he had in his friend Deyverdun, a fellow-worker who could render him most valuable assistance. Gibbon never knew German, which is not surprising when we reflect what German literature amounted to, in those days; and he soon discovered that the most valuable authorities of his projected work were in the German language. But Deyverdun was a perfect master of that

tongue, and translated a mass of documents for the use of his friend. They laboured for two years in collecting materials, before Gibbon felt himself justified in entering on the "more agreeable task of composition." And even then he considered the preparation insufficient, as no doubt it was. He felt he could not do justice to his subject; uninformed as he was "by the scholars and statesmen, and remote from the archives and libraries of the Swiss republic." Such a beginning was not of good augury for the success of the undertaking. He never wrote more than about sixty quarto pages of the projected work, and these, as they were in French, were submitted to the judgment of the literary society of foreigners in London, before whom the MS. was read. The author was unknown, and Gibbon attended the meeting, and thus listened without being observed "to the free strictures and unfavourable sentence of his judges." He admits that the momentary sensation was painful; but the condemnation was ratified by his cooler thoughts: and he declares that he did not regret the loss of a slight and superficial essay, though it "had cost some expense, much labour, and more time." He says in his Memoirs that he burnt the sheets. But this, strange to say, was a mistake on his part. They were found among his papers after his death, and though not published by Lord Sheffield in the first two volumes of his Miscellaneous Works, which the latter edited in 1796, they appeared in the supplemental third volume which came out in 1815. We thus can judge for ourselves of their value. One sees at once why and how they failed to satisfy their author's mature judgment. They belonged to that style of historical writing which consists in the rhetorical transcription and adornment of the original authorities, but in which the writer never gets close enough to his subject to apply the touchstone of a clear and trenchant criticism. Such criticism indeed was not common in Switzerland in his day, and one cannot blame Gibbon for not anticipating the researches of modern investigators. But his historical sense was aroused to suspicion by the story of William Tell, which he boldly sets down as a fable. Altogether, one may pronounce the sketch to be pleasantly written in a flowing, picturesque narrative, and showing immense advance in style beyond the essay on the Study of Literature. David Hume, to whom he submitted it, urged him to persevere, and the advice was justified under the circumstances, although one cannot now regret that it was not followed,

After the failure of this scheme, Gibbon, still in connection with Deyverdun, planned a periodical work under the title of *Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne.* Only two volumes ever appeared, and the speculation does not seem to have met with much success. Gibbon "presumes to say that their merit was superior to their reputation, though they produced more reputation than emolument." The first volume is executed with evident pains, and gives a fair picture of the literary and social condition of England at the time. The heavy review articles are interspersed with what is intended to be lighter matter on the fashions, foibles, and promi-

nent characters of the day. Gibbon owns the authorship of the first article on Lord Littelton's history of Henry the Second, and his hand is discernible in the account of the fourth volume of Lardner's work *On the Credibility of the Gospel History.* The first has no merit beyond a faithful report. The latter is written with much more zest and vigour, and shows the interest that he already took in Christian antiquities. Other articles, evidently from the pen of Deyverdun, on the English theatre and Beau Nash of Bath, are the liveliest in the collection. The magazine was avowedly intended for Continental readers, and might have obtained success if it had been continued long enough. But it died before it had time to make itself known.*

When the *Mémoires Littéraires* collapsed Gibbon was again left without a definite object to concentrate his energy, and with his work still to seek. One might wonder why he did not seriously prepare for the *Decline and Fall.* It must have been chiefly at this time that it was "contemplated at an awful distance," perhaps even with numbing doubt whether the distance would ever be lessened and the work achieved, or even begun. The probability is he had too little peace of mind to undertake anything that required calm and protracted labour. "While so many of my acquaintance were married, or in Parliament, or advancing with a rapid step in the various roads of honor or fortune I stood alone, immovable, and insignificant. . . . The progress and the knowledge of our domestic disorders aggravated my anxiety, and I began to apprehend that in my old age I might be left without the fruits of either industry or inheritance." Perhaps a reasonable apprehension of poverty is more paralysing than the reality. In the latter case prompt action is so imperatively commanded that the mind has no leisure for the fatal indulgence of regrets; but when indigence seems only imminent, and has not yet arrived, a certain lethargy is apt to be produced out of which only the most practical characters can rouse themselves, and these are not, as a rule, scholars by nature. We need not be surprised that Gibbon during these years did nothing serious, and postponed undertaking his great work. The inspiration needed to accomplish such a long and arduous course as it implied could not be kindled in a mind harrassed by pecuniary cares. The fervent heat of a poet's imagination may glow as brightly in poverty as in opulence, but the gentle yet prolonged enthusiasm of the historian is likely to be quenched when the resources of life are too insécure.†

It is perhaps not wholly fanciful to suspect that Gibbon's next

* Two volumes appeared of the *Mémoires Littéraires.* Of these only the first is to be found in the British Museum. It is a small 12mo, containing 230 pages. Here is the Table des Matières:—(1) Histoire de Henri II., par Milord Lyttelton; (2) Le Nouveau Guide de Bath; (3) Essai sur l'Histoire de la Société Civile, par M. Ferguson; (4) Conclusions des Mémoires de Miss Sydney Bidulph; Théologie (5) Recueil des Témoignages Anciens, par Lardner; (6) Le Confessional; (7) Transactions Philosophiques; (8) Le Gouverneur, par D. L. F. Spectacles, Beaux Arts, Nouvelles Littéraires.

† Scholarship has been frequently cultivated amidst great poverty; but from the time of Thucydides, the owner of mines, to Grote, the banker, historians seem to have been in, at least, easy circumstances.

literary effort was suggested and determined by the inward discomposure he felt at this time. By nature he was not a controversialist; not that he wanted the abilities to support that character, but his mind was too full, fertile, and fond of real knowledge to take much pleasure in the generally barren occupation of gainsaying other men. But at this point in his life he made an exception, and an unprovoked exception. When he wrote his famous vindication of the first volume of the *Decline and Fall* he was acting in self-defence, and repelling savage attacks upon his historical veracity. But in his *Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the Æneid* he sought controversy for its own sake, and became a polemic—shall we say out of gaiety or bitterness of heart? That inward unrest easily produces an aggressive spirit is a matter of common observation, and it may well have been that in attacking Warburton he sought a diversion from the worry of domestic cares. Be that as it may, his *Observations* are the most pungent and dashing effusion he ever allowed himself. It was his first effort in English prose, and it is doubtful whether he ever managed his mother tongue better, if indeed he ever managed it so well. The little tract is written with singular spirit and rapidity of style. It is clear, trenchant, and direct to a fault. It is indeed far less critical than polemical, and shows no trace of lofty calm, either moral or intellectual. We are not repelled much by his eagerness to refute and maltreat his opponent. That was not alien from the usages of the time, and Warburton at least had no right to complain of such a style of controversy. But there is no width and elevation of view. The writer does not carry the discussion up to a higher level, and dominate his adversary from a superior standpoint. Controversy is always ephemeral and vulgar, unless it can rise to the discussion and establishment of facts and principles valuable for themselves, independently of the particular point at issue. It is this quality which has made the master-works of Chillingworth and Bentley supereminent. The particular point for which the writers contended is settled or forgotten. But in moving up to that point they touched—such was their large discourse of reason—on topics of perennial interest, did such justice, though only in passing, to certain other truths, that they are gratefully remembered ever after. Thus Bentley's dissertation on Phalaris is read, not for the main thesis—proof of the spuriousness of the letters—but for the profound knowledge and admirable logic with which subsidiary positions are maintained on the way to it. Tried by this standard, and he deserves to be tried by a high standard, Gibbon fails not much, but entirely. The *Observations* are rarely, if ever, quoted as an authority of weight by any one engaged on classical or Virgilian literature. This arises from the attitude of the writer, who is nearly solely occupied with establishing negative conclusions that Æneas was *not* a lawgiver, that the Sixth Æneid is *not* an allegory, that Virgil had *not* been initiated in the Eleusinan mysteries when he wrote it, and so forth. Indeed the best judges now hold that he has not done full justice to the

grain of truth that was to be found in Warburton's clumsy and prolix hypothesis.* It should be added that Gibbon very candidly admits and regrets the acrimonious style of the pamphlet, and condemns still more "in a personal attack his cowardly concealment of his name and character."

The *Observations* were the last work which Gibbon published in his father's lifetime. His account of the latter's death (November 10, 1770) is feelingly written, and shows the affectionate side of his own nature to advantage. He acknowledges his father's failings, his weakness and inconstancy, but insists that they were compensated by the virtues of the head and heart, and the warmest sentiments of honour and humanity. "His graceful person, polite address, gentle manners, and unaffected cheerfulness recommended him to the favour of every company." And Gibbon recalls with emotion "the pangs of shame, tenderness, and self-reproach" which preyed on his father's mind at the prospect, no doubt, of leaving an embarrassed estate and precarious fortune to his son and widow. He had no taste for study in the fatal summer of 1770, and declares that he would have been ashamed if he had. "I submitted to the order of nature," he says, in words which recall his resignation on losing his mistress—"I submitted to the order of nature, and my grief was soothed by the conscious satisfaction that I had discharged all the duties of filial piety." We see Gibbon very fairly in this remark. He had tenderness, steady and warm attachments, but no passion.

Nearly two years elapsed after his father's death, before he was able to secure from the wreck of his estate a sufficient competence to establish himself in London. His house was No. 7, Bentinck Street, near Manchester Square, then a remote suburb close to the country fields. His housekeeping was that of a solitary bachelor, who could afford an occasional dinner-party. Though not absolutely straitened in means, we shall presently see that he was never quite at his ease in money matters while he remained in London. But he had now freedom and no great anxieties, and he began seriously to contemplate the execution of his great work.

Gibbon, as we have seen, looked back with little satisfaction on the five years between his return from his travels and his father's death. They are also the years during which his biographer is able to follow him with the least certainty. Hardly any of his letters which refer to that period have been preserved, and he has glided rapidly over it in his Memoirs. Yet it was, in other respects besides the matter of pecuniary troubles, a momentous epoch in his life. The peculiar views which he adopted and partly professed on religion must have been formed then. But the date, the circumstance, and the occasion, are left in darkness. Up to December 18,

* Conington, *Introduction to the Sixth Æneid.* "A reader of the present day will, I think, be induced to award the palm of learning and ingenuity to Warburton." "The language and imagery of the sixth book more than once suggests that Virgil intended to embody in his picture the poetical view of that inner side of ancient religion which the mysteries may be supposed to have presented."—*Suggestion on the Study of the Æneid*, by H. Nettleship, p. 13.

1763, Gibbon was evidently a believer. In an entry in his private journal under that date he speaks of a Communion Sunday at Lausanne as affording an "edifying spectacle," on the ground that there is "neither business nor parties, and they interdict even whist" on that day. How soon after this his opinions began to change, it is impossible to say. But we are conscious of a markedly different tone in the *Observations*, and a sneer at "the ancient alliance between the avarice of the priests and the credulity of the people" is in the familiar style of the Deists from Toland to Chubb. There is no evidence of his familiarity with the widely diffused works of the freethinkers, and as far as I am aware he does not quote or refer to them even once. But they could hardly have escaped his notice. Still his strong historic sense and solid erudition would be more likely to be repelled than attracted by their vague and inaccurate scholarship, and chimerical theories of the light of Nature. Still we know that he practically adopted, in the end, at least the negative portion of these views, and the question is, When did he do so? His visit to Paris, and the company that he frequented there, might suggest that as a probable date of his change of opinions. But the entry just referred to was subsequent by several months to that visit, and we may with confidence assume that no freethinker of the eighteenth century would pronounce the austerities of a Communion Sunday in a Calvinist town an edifying spectacle. It is probable that his relinquishing of dogmatic faith was gradual, and for a time unconscious. It was an age of tepid belief, except among the Nonjurors and Methodists; and with neither of these groups could he have had the least sympathy. His acquaintance with Hume, and his partiality for the writings of Bayle, are more probable sources of a change of sentiment which was in a way predestined by natural bias and cast of mind. Any occasion would serve to precipitate the result. In any case, this result had been attained some years before the publication of the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*, in 1776. Referring to his preparatory studies for the execution of that work, he says, "As I believed, and as I still believe, that the propagation of the Gospel and the triumph of the Church are inseparably connected with the decline of the Roman monarchy, I weighed the causes and effects of the revolution, and contrasted the narratives and apologies of the Christians themselves with the glances of candour or enmity which the pagans have cast on the rising sects. The Jewish and heathen testimonies, as they are collected and illustrated by Dr. Lardner, directed without superseding my search of the originals, and in an ample dissertation on the miraculous darkness of the Passion I privately drew my conclusions from the silence of an unbelieving age." Here we have the argument which concludes the sixteenth chapter distinctly announced. But the previous travail of spirit is not indicated. Gibbon has marked with precision the stages of his conversion to Romanism. But the following chapters of the history of his religious opinions he has not written, or he has suppressed them, and we can only vaguely guess their outline.

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE IN LONDON.—PARLIAMENT.—THE BOARD OF TRADE.—THE DECLINE AND FALL.—MIGRATION TO LAUSANNE.

GIBBON'S settlement in London as master in his own house did not come too soon. A few more years of anxiety and dependence, such as he had passed of late with his father in the country, would probably have dried up the spring of literary ambition and made him miss his career. He had no tastes to fit him for a country life. The pursuit of farming only pleased him in Virgil's *Georgics*. He seems neither to have liked nor to have needed exercise, and English rural sports had no charms for him. "I never handled a gun, I seldom mounted a horse, and my philosophic walks were soon terminated by a shady bench, where I was long detained by the sedentary amusement of reading or meditation." He was a born *citadin*. "Never," he writes to his friend Holroyd, "never pretend to allure me by painting in odious colours the dust of London. I love the dust, and whenever I move into the Weald it is to visit you, and not your trees." His ideal was to devote the morning, commencing early—at seven, say—to study, and the afternoon and evening to society and recreation, not "disdaining the innocent amusement of a game at cards." And this plan of a happy life he very fairly realised in his little house in Bentinck Street. The letters that we have of his relating to this period are buoyant with spirits and self-congratulation at his happy lot. He writes to his stepmother that he is every day more satisfied with his present mode of life, which he always believed was most calculated to make him happy. The stable and moderate stimulus of congenial society, alternating with study, was what he liked. The excitement and dissipation of a town life, which purchase pleasure to-day at the expense of fatigue and disgust to-morrow, were as little to his taste as the amusements of the country. In 1772, when he settled in London, he was young in years, but he was old in tastes, and he enjoyed himself with the complacency often seen in healthy old men. "My library," he writes to Holroyd in 1773, "Kensington Gardens, and a few parties with new acquaintance, among whom I reckon Goldsmith and Sir Joshua Reynolds," (poor Goldsmith was to die the year following), "fill up my time, and the monster *ennui* preserves a very respectful distance. By the by, your friends Batt, Sir John Russell, and

Lascelles dined with me one day before they set off: *for I sometimes give the prettiest little dinner in the world.*" One can imagine Gibbon, the picture of plumpness and content, doing the honours of his modest household. Still he was never prominent in society, even after the publication of his great work had made him famous. Lord Sheffield says that his conversation was superior to his writings, and in a circle of intimate friends it is probable that this was true. But in the free encounter of wit and argument, the same want of readiness that made him silent in parliament would most likely restrict his conversational power. It may be doubted if there is a striking remark or saying of his on record. His name occurs in Boswell, but nearly always as a *persona muta.* Certainly the arena where Johnson and Burke encountered each other was not fitted to bring out a shy and not very quick man. Against Johnson he manifestly harboured a sort of grudge, and if he ever felt the weight of Ursa Major's paw it is not surprising.

He rather oddly preserved an instance of his conversational skill, as if aware that he would not easily get credit for it. The scene was in Paris. "At the table of my old friend M. de Foncemagne, I was involved in a dispute with the Abbé de Mably . . . As I might be partial in my own cause, I shall transcribe the words of an unknown critic. 'You were, my dear Théodon, at M. de Foncemagne's house, when the Abbé de Mably and Mr. Gibbon dined there along with a number of guests. The conversation ran almost entirely on history. The Abbé, being a profound politician, turned it while at dessert on the administration of affairs, and as by genius and temper, and the habit of admiring Livy, he values only the republican system, he began to boast of the excellence of republics, being well persuaded that the learned Englishman would approve of all he said and admire the profundity of genius that had enabled a Frenchman to discover all these advantages. But Mr. Gibbon, knowing by experience the inconveniences of a popular government, was not at all of his opinion, and generously took up the defence of monarchy. The Abbé wished to convince him out of Livy, and by some arguments drawn from Plutarch in favour of the Spartans. Mr. Gibbon, being endowed with a most excellent memory, and having all events present to his mind, soon got the command of the conversation. The Abbé grew angry, they lost possession of themselves, and said hard things of each other. The Englishman retaining his native coolness, watched for his advantages, and pressed the Abbé with increasing success in proportion as he was more disturbed by passion. The conversation grew warmer, and was broken off by M. de Foncemagne's rising from table and passing into the parlour, where no one was tempted to renew it."

But if not brilliant in society, he was very *répandu*, and was welcomed in the best circles. He was a member of Boodle's, White's, Brooks's, and Almack's,* and "there were few persons

* Not the assembly-room of that name, but a gaming-club where the play was high I find no evidence that Gibbon ever yielded to the prevalent passion for gambling.

in the literary or political world to whom he was a stranger." It is to be regretted that the best sketch of him at this period borders on caricature. "The learned Gibbon," says Colman, "was a curious counterbalance to the learned (may I not say the less learned) Johnson. Their manners and tastes, both in writing and conversation, were as different as their habiliments. On the day I first sat down with Johnson in his rusty-brown suit and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon was placed opposite to me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword. Each had his measured phraseology, and Johnson's famous parallel between Dryden and Pope might be loosely parodied in reference to himself and Gibbon. Johnson's style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant: the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettledrums and trumpets, Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys. Johnson hewed passages through the Alps, while Gibbon levelled walks through parks and gardens. Mauled as I nad been by Johnson, Gibbon poured balm upon my bruises by condescending once or twice in the course of the evening to talk with me. The great historian was light and playful, suiting his matter to the capacity of the boy: but it was done *more suo*—still his mannerism prevailed, still he tapped his snuff-box, still he smirked and smiled, and rounded his periods with the same air of good-breeding, as if he were conversing with men. His mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage." (Quoted in Croker's *Boswell.*)

Now and then he even joins in a masquerade, "the finest thing ever seen," which costs two thousand guineas. But the chief charm of it to him seems to have been the pleasure that it gave to his Aunt Porten. These little vanities are however quite superficial, and are never allowed to interfere with work.

Now indeed he was no loiterer. In three years after his settlement in London he had produced the first volume of the *Decline and Fall:* an amount of diligence which will not be underrated by those who appreciate the vast difference between commencing and continuing an undertaking of that magnitude. "At the outset," he says, "all was dark and doubtful; even the title of the work, the true æra of the decline and fall of the empire, the limits of the Introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative,—and I was often tempted to cast away the labour of seven years;"—alternations no doubt of hope and despair familiar to every sincere and competent student. But he had taken the best and only reliable means of securing himself from the danger of these fluctuations of spirit. He finished his reading and preparation before he began to write, and when he at last put pen to paper his course lay open before him, with no fear of sudden and disquieting stoppages arising from imperfect knowledge and need of further inquiry. It is a pity that we cannot follow the elaboration of the work in detail. That portion of his Memoirs in which he speaks of it is very short and fragmentary, and the defect is not

supplied by his letters. He seems to have worked with singular ease and mastery of his subject, and never to have felt his task as a strain or a fatigue. Even his intimate friends were not aware that he was engaged on a work of such magnitude, and it is amusing to see his friend Holroyd warn him against a hasty and immature publication when he learned that the book was in the press. He had apparently heard little of it before. This alone would show with what ease and smoothness Gibbon must have worked. He had excellent health—a strange fact after his sickly childhood; society unbent his mind instead of distracting it; his stomach was perfect—perhaps too good, as about this time he began to be admonished by the gout. He never seems to have needed change. "Sufficient for the summer is the evil thereof, viz., one distant country excursion." There was an extraordinary difference in this respect between the present age and those which went before it; restlessness and change of scene have become almost a necessity of life with us, whereas our ancestors could continue healthy and happy for months and years without stirring from home. What is there to explain the change? We must not pretend that we work harder than they did.* However, Gibbon was able to keep himself in good condition with his long spell of work in the morning, and his dinner-parties at home or elsewhere in the afternoon, and to have kept at home as much as he could. Whenever he went away to the country, it was on invitations which he could not well refuse. The result was a leisurely, unhasting fulness of achievement, calm stretches of thorough and contented work, which have left their marks on the *Decline and Fall.* One of its charms is a constant good humor and complacency; not a sign is visible that the writer is pressed for time, or wants to get his performance out of hand; but, on the contrary, a calm lingering over details, sprightly asides in the notes, which the least hurry would have suppressed or passed by, and a general impression conveyed of thorough enjoyment in the immensity of the labour.

One would have liked to see this elaboration more clearly, to have been allowed a glimpse into his workshop while he was so engaged. Unfortunately the editor of his journals has selected the relatively unimportant records of his earlier studies, and left us in the dark as regards this far more interesting period. He was such an indefatigable diarist that it is unlikely that he neglected to keep a journal in this crisis of his studies. But it has not been published, and it may have been destroyed. All that we have is this short paragraph in his Memoirs:—

"The classics, as low as Tacitus and the younger Pliny and Juvenal, were my old and familiar companions. I insensibly plunged into the ocean of the Augustan history, and in the descending series I investigated, with my pen almost always in my hand, the original records, both Greek

* The most remarkable instance of all is the case of Newton, who, according to Dr. Whewell, resided in Trinity College "for thirty-five years without the interruption of a month."—*Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, vol. ii. book vii.

and Latin, from Dion Cassius to Ammianus Marcellinus, from the reign of Trajan to the last age of the Western Cæsars. The subsidiary rays of medals and inscriptions of geography and chronology were thrown on their proper objects, and I applied the collections of Tillemont to fix and arrange within my reach the loose and scattered atoms of historical information. Through the darkness of the middle ages I explored my way in the *Annals and Antiquities of Italy* of the learned Muratori, and diligently compared them with the parallel or transverse lines of Sigonius and Maffei, Baronius and Pagi, till I almost grasped the ruins of Rome in the fourteenth century, without suspecting that this final chapter must be attained by the labour of six quartos and twenty years."

When the time for composition arrived, he showed a fastidiousness which was full of good augury. "Three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect." His hand grew firmer as he advanced. But the two final chapters interposed a long delay, and needed "three successive revisals to reduce them from a volume to their present size. Gibbon spent more time over his first volume than over any one of the five which followed it. To these he devoted almost regularly two years apiece, more or less, whereas the first cost him three years—so disproportionately difficult is the start in matters of this kind.

While engaged in the composition of the first volume, he became a member of Parliament. One morning at half-past seven, "as he was destroying an army of barbarians," he heard a double rap at his door. It was a friend who came to inquire if he was desirous of entering the House of Commons. The answer may be imagined, and he took his seat as member for the borough of Liskeard after the general election in 1774.

Gibbon's political career is the side of his history from which a friendly biographer would most readily turn away. Not that it was exceptionally ignoble or self-seeking if tried by the standard of the time, but it was altogether commonplace and unworthy of him. The fact that he never even once opened his mouth in the House is not in itself blameworthy, though disappointing in a man of his power. It was indeed laudable enough if he had nothing to say. But why had he nothing to say? His excuse is timidity and want of readiness, We may reasonably assume that the cause lay deeper. With his mental vigour he would soon have overcome such obstacles if he had really wished and tried to overcome them. The fact is that he never tried because he never wished. It is a singular thing to say of such a man, but nevertheless true, that he had no taste or capacity whatever for politics. He lived at one of the most exciting periods of our history: he assisted at debates in which constitutional and imperial questions of the highest moment were discussed by masters of eloquence and state policy, and he hardly appears to have been aware of the fact. It was not that he despised politics as Walpole affected to do, or that he regarded party struggles as "barbarous and absurd faction," as Hume did; still less did he pass by them with the supercilious indifference of a mystic

whose eyes are fixed on the individual spirit of man as the one spring of good and evil. He never rose to the level of the ordinary citizen or even partisan, who takes an exaggerated view perhaps of the importance of the politics of the day, but who at any rate thereby shows a sense of social solidarity and the claims of civic communion. He called himself a Whig, but he had no zeal for Whig principles. He voted steadily with Lord North, and quite approved of taxing and coercing America into slavery; but he had no high notions of the royal prerogative, and was lukewarm in this as in everything. With such absence of passion one might have expected that he would be at least shrewd and sagacious in his judgments on politics. But he is nothing of the kind. In his familiar letters he reserves generally a few lines for parliamentary gossip, amid chat about the weather and family business. He never approaches to a broad survey of policy, or express serious and settled convictions on home or foreign affairs. Throughout the American war he never seems to have really made up his mind on the nature of the struggle, and the momentous issues that it involved. Favourable news puts him in high spirits, which are promptly cooled by the announcement of reverses; not that he ever shows any real anxiety or despondency about the commonwealth. His opinions on the subject are at the mercy of the last mail. It is disappointing to find an elegant trifler like Horace Walpole not only far more discerning in his appreciation of such a crisis, but also far more patriotically sensitive as to the wisdom of the means of meeting it, than the historian of Rome. Gibbon's tone often amounts to levity, and he chronicles the most serious measures with an unconcern really surprising. "In a few days we stop the ports of New England. I cannot write volumes: but I am more and more convinced that with firmness all may go well: yet I sometimes doubt." (February 8, 1775). "Something will be done this year; but in the spring the force of the country will be exerted to the utmost: Scotch Highlanders, Irish Papists, Hanoverians, Canadians, Indians, &c., will all in various shapes be employed." (August 1, 1775). "What think you of the season, of Siberia is it not? A pleasant campaign in America." (January 29, 1776). At precisely the same time the sagacious coxcomb of Strawberry Hill was writing thus: "The times are indeed very serious. Pacification with America is not the measure adopted. More regiments are ordered thither, and to-morrow a plan, I fear equivalent to a declaration of war, is to be laid before both Houses. They are bold ministers methinks who does not hesitate on civil war, in which victory may bring ruin, and disappointment endanger their heads . . . Acquisition alone can make burdens palatable, and in a war with our own colonies we must inflict instead of acquiring them, and we cannot recover them without undoing them. I am still to learn wisdom and experience, if these things are not so." (Letter to Mann, January 25, 1775). "A war with our colonies, which is now declared, is a proof how much influence jargon has on human actions. A war on our own trade is popular." (Feb-

ruary 15, 1775). "The war with America goes on briskly, that is as far as voting goes. A great majority in both houses is as brave as a mob ducking a pick-pocket. They flatter themselves they shall terrify the colonies into submission in three months, and are amazed to hear that there is no such probability. They might as well have excommunicated them, and left it to the devil to put the sentence into execution." (February 18, 1775). Not only is Walpole's judgments wiser, but the elements of a wise judgment were present to him in a way in which they were not so to Gibbon. When the latter does attempt a forecast, he shows, as might be expected, as little penetration of the future as appreciation of the present. Writing from Paris on August 11, 1777, when all French society was ablaze with enthusiasm for America, and the court just on the point of yielding to the current, he is under no immediate apprehensions of a war with France, and "would not be surprised if next summer the French were to lend their cordial assistance to England as the weaker party." The emptiness of his letter as regards home politics perhaps admits of a more favourable explanation, and may be owing to the careful suppression by their editor, Lord Sheffield, of everything of real interest. It is impossible to estimate the weight of this consideration, but it may be great. Still we have a sufficient number of his letters to be able to say that on the whole they are neither thoughtful nor graphic: they give us neither pictures of events nor insight into the times. It must be, however, remembered that Gibbon greatly disliked letter-writing, and never wrote unless he was obliged.

It was no secret that Gibbon wanted a place under government. Moderate as his establishment seems to have been, it was more expensive than he could afford, and he looked, not without warrant, to a supplement of income from one of the rich windfalls which in that time of sinecures were wont to refresh the spirits of sturdy supporters of administration. He had influential friends, and even relatives, in and near the government, and but for his parliamentary nullity he would probably have been provided with a comfortable berth at an early period. But his "sincere and silent vote" was not valuable enough to command a high price from his patrons. Once only was he able to help them with his pen, when he drew up, at the request of Lords Thurlow and Weymouth, his *Mémoire Justificatif*, in French, in which "he vindicated against the French manifesto the justice of the British arms." It was a service worthy of a small fee, which no doubt he received. He had to wait till 1779, when he had been five years in Parliament, before his cousin Mr. Eliot, and his friend Wedderburne, the Attorney-General, were able to find him a post as one of the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations. The Board of Trade, of which he became one of the eight members, survives in mortal memory only from being embalmed in the bright amber of one of Burke's great speeches. "This board, Sir, has had both its original formation and its regeneration in a job. In a job it was conceived, and in a job its mother brought it forth. . . . This

board is a sort of temperate bed of influence: a sort of gently ripening hothouse, where eight members of Parliament receive salaries of a thousand a year for a certain given time, in order to mature at a proper season a claim to two thousand, granted for doing less" (*Speech on Economical Reform*). Gibbon, with entire good humour, acknowledges the justice of Burke's indictment, and says he was "heard with delight, even by those whose existence he proscribed." After all, he only enjoyed the emolument of his office for three years, and he places that emolument at a lower figure than Burke did. He could not have received more than between two and three thousand pounds of public money; and when we consider what manner of men have fattened on the national purse, it would be churlish to grudge that small sum to the historian of the *Decline and Fall.* The misfortune is that, reasonably or otherwise, doubts were raised as to Gibbon's complete straightforwardness and honorable adhesion to party ties in accepting office. He says himself: "My acceptance of a place provoked some of the leaders of opposition with whom I had lived in habits of intimacy, and I was most unjustly accused of deserting a party in which I had never enlisted." There is certainly no evidence that those who were most qualified to speak, those who gave him the place and reckoned on his vote, ever complained of want of allegiance. On the other hand, Gibbon's own letter to Edward Eliot, accepting the place, betrays a somewhat uneasy conscience. He owns that he was far from approving all the past measures of the administration, even some of those in which he himself had silently concurred; that he saw many capital defects in the characters of some of the present ministers, and was sorry that in so alarming a situation of public affairs the country had not the assistance of several able and honest men who were now in opposition. Still, for various reasons, he did not consider himself in any way implicated, and rather suspiciously concludes with an allusion to his pecuniary difficulties and a flourish. "The addition of the salary which is now offered will make my situation perfectly easy, but I hope that you will do me the justice to believe that my mind could not be so unless I were conscious of the rectitude of my conduct."

The strongest charge against Gibbon in reference to this matter is asserted to come from his friend Fox, in this odd form. "In June 1781, Mr. Fox's library came to be sold. Amongst his other books the first volume of Mr. Gibbon's history was brought to the hammer. In the blank leaf of this was a note in the handwriting of Mr. Fox, stating a remarkable declaration of our historian at a well-known tavern in Pall Mall, and contrasting it with Mr. Gibbon's political conduct afterwards. 'The author,' it observed, 'at Brooks's said that there was no salvation for this country until six heads of the principal persons in administration' (Lord North being then prime minister) 'were laid upon the table. Yet,' as the observation added, 'eleven days afterwards this same gentleman accepted a place of a lord of trade under these very ministers, and has acted with them ever since.'" It is impossible to tell what amount of

truth there is in this story, and not very important to inquire. It rests on the authority of a strong personal enemy, and the cordial intimacy which ever subsisted between Gibbon and Fox seems to show that it was mere calumny. Perhaps the fact that Gibbon had really no opinions in politics may have led persons of opposite parties to think that he agreed with them more than he did, and when he merely followed his own interest, they may have inferred that he was deserting their principles. After losing his post on the Board of Trade he still hoped for Government employ, "either a secure seat at the Board of Customs or Excise," or in a diplomatic capacity. He was disappointed. If Lord Sheffield is to be believed, it was his friend Fox who frustrated his appointment as secretary of embassy at Paris, when he had been already named to that office.

The way in which Gibbon acted and afterwards spoke in reference to the celebrated Coalition gives perhaps the best measure of his political calibre. He voted among the rank and file of Lord North's followers for the Coalition with meek subserviency. He speaks of a "principle of gratitude" which actuated him on this occasion. Lord North had given him his seat, and if a man's conscience allows him to think rather of his patron than of his country, there is nothing to be said, except that his code of political ethics is low. We may admit that his vote was pledged; but there is also no doubt that any gratitude that there was in the matter was stimulated by a lively sense of favours to come. The Portland ministry had not been long in office when he wrote in the following terms to his friend Deyverdun: "You have not forgotten that I went into Parliament without patriotism and without ambition, and that all my views tended to the convenient and respectable place of a lord of trade. This situation I at length obtained. I possessed it for three years, from 1779 to 1782, and the net produce, which amounted to 750*l.* sterling, augmented my income to my wants and desires. But in the spring of last year the storm burst over our heads. Lord North was overthrown, your humble servant turned out, and even the Board of Trade, of which I was a member, abolished and broken up for ever by Mr. Burke's reform. To complete my misfortunes, I still remain a member of the Lower House. At the end of the last Parliament, Mr. Eliot withdrew his nomination. But the favour of Lord North facilitated my re-election, and gratitude imposed on me the duty of making available for his service the rights which I held in part from him. That winter we fought under the allied standards of Lord North and Mr. Fox: we triumphed over Lord Shelburne and the peace, and my friend (*i.e.* Lord North) remounted his steed in the quality of a secretary of state. Now he can easily say to me, 'It was a great deal for me, it was nothing for you;' and in spite of the strongest assurances, I have too much reason to allow me to have much faith. With great genius and very respectable talents, he has now neither the title nor the credit of prime minister; more active colleagues carry off the most savoury morsels which their voracious creatures immedi-

ately devour: our misfortunes and reforms have diminished the number of favours; either through pride or through indolence I am but a bad suitor, and if at last I obtain something, it may perhaps be on the eve of a fresh revolution, which will in an instant snatch from me that which has cost me so many cares and pains."

Such a letter speaks for itself. Gibbon might well say that he entered parliament without patriotism and without ambition. The only redeeming feature is the almost cynical frankness with which he openly regards politics from a personal point of view. However, it may be pleaded that the letter was written to a bosom friend at a moment of great depression, and when Gibbon's pecuniary difficulties were pressing him severely. The Coalition promised him a place, and that was enough; the contempt for all principle which had brought it about was not thought of. But even this minute excuse does not apply to the way in which, years after, when he was in comfort at Lausanne, he refers to the subject in his Memoirs. The light in which the Coalition deserved to be regarded was clear by that time. Yet he speaks of it, not only without blame or regret, but contrives to cast suspicion on the motives of those who were disgusted by it, and bestowed their allegiance elsewhere.

"It is not the purpose of this narrative to expatiate on the public or secret history of the times: the schism which followed the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, the appointment of the Earl of Shelbourne, the resignation of Mr. Fox and his famous coalition with Lord North. But I may assert with some degree of assurance that in their political conflict those great antagonists had never felt any personal animosity to each other, that their reconciliation was easy and sincere, and that their friendship has never been clouded by the shadow of suspicion or jealousy. The *most violent* or *venal* of their respective followers embraced this fair occasion of revolt, but their alliance still commanded a majority of the House of Commons, the peace was censured, Lord Shelbourne resigned, and the two friends knelt on the same cushion to take the oath of secretary of state. From a principle of gratitude I adhered to the Coalition; my vote was counted in the day of battle, but I was overlooked in the division of the spoil."

From this we learn that it was only the *violent* and the *venal* who disapproved of the Coalition. One would like to know how Gibbon explained the fact that at the general election of 1784 no less than one hundred and sixty of the supporters of the Coalition lost their seats, and that Fox's political reputation was all but irretrievably ruined from this time forward.

Meanwhile he had not neglected his own proper work. The first volume of his history was published in February, 1776. It derived, he says, "more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author." In the first instance he intended to print only five hundred copies, but the number was doubled by the "prophetic taste" of his printer, Mr. Strahan. The book was received with a burst of applause—it was a *succès fou*. The first impression was exhausted in a few days, and a second and third edi-

tion were scarcely adequate to the demand. The wiser few were as warm in their eulogies as the general public. Hume declared that if he had not been personally acquainted with the author, he should have been surprised by such a performance coming from any Englishman in that age. Dr. Robertson, Adam Ferguson, and Horace Walpole joined in the chorus. Walpole betrays an amusing mixture of admiration and pique at not having found the author out before. "I know him a little, and never suspected the extent of his talents; for he is perfectly modest, or I want penetration, which I know too; but I intend to know him a great deal more." He oddly enough says that Gibbon was the "son of a foolish alderman," which shows at least how little the author was known in the great world up to this time. Now, however, society was determined to know more of him, the surest proof, not of merit, but of success. It must have been a rather intoxicating moment, but Gibbon had a cool head not easily turned. It would be unfair not to add that he had something much better, a really warm and affectionate regard for old friends, the best preservative against the fumes of flattery and sudden fame. Holroyd, Deyverdun, Madame Necker were more to him than all the great people with whom he now became acquainted. Necker and his wife came over from Paris and paid him a long visit in Bentinck Street, when his laurels were just fresh. "I live with her," he writes, "just as I used to do twenty years ago, laugh at her Paris varnish, and oblige her to become a simple reasonable Suissesse. The man, who might read English husbands lessons of proper and dutiful behaviour, is a sensible, good-natured creature." The next year he returned the visit to Paris. His fame had preceded him, and he received the cordial but discriminating welcome which the *ancien régime* at that time specially reserved for *gens d'esprit*. Madame du Deffand writes to Walpole, "Mr. Gibbon has the greatest success here; it is quite a struggle to get him." He did not deny himself a rather sumptuous style of living while in Paris. Perhaps the recollection of the unpleasant effect of his English clothes and the long waists of the French on his former visit dwelt in his mind, for now, like Walpole, he procured a new outfit at once. "After decking myself out with silks and silver, the ordinary establishment of coach, lodgings, servants, eating, and pocket expenses, does not exceed 60*l.* per month. Yet I have two footmen in handsome liveries behind my coach, and my apartment is hung with damask."

The remainder of his life in London has nothing important. He persevered assiduously with his history, and had two more quartos ready in 1781. They were received with less enthusiasm than the first, although they were really superior. Gibbon was rather too modestly inclined to agree with the public and "to believe that, especially in the beginning, they were more prolix and less entertaining" than the previous volume. He also wasted some weeks on his vindication of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of that volume, which had excited a host of feeble and ill-mannered attacks. His defence was complete, and in excellent temper. But

the piece has no permanent value. His assailants were so ignorant and silly that they gave no scope for a great controversial reply. Neither perhaps did the subject admit of it. A literary war generally makes people think of Bentley's incomparable *Phalaris*. But that was almost a unique occasion and victory in the history of letters. Bentley himself, the most pugnacious of men, never found such another.

And so the time glided by, till we come to the year 1783. Lord North had resigned office, the Board of Trade was abolished, and Gibbon had lost his convenient salary. The outlook was not pleasant. The seat on the Board of Customs of Excise with which his hopes had been for a time kept up, receded into a remote distance, and he came to the conclusion "that the reign of pensions and sinecures was at an end." It was clearly necessary to take some important step in the way of retrenchment. After he had lost his official income, his expenses exceeded his revenue by something like four hundred pounds. A less expensive style of living in London never seems to have presented itself as an alternative. So, like many an Englishman before and since, he resolved to go abroad to economise.

His old friend Deyverdun was now settled in a comfortable house at Lausanne, overlooking the Lake of Geneva. They had not met for eight years. But the friendship had begun a quarter of a century before, in the old days when Gibbon was a boarder in Pavillard's house, and the embers of old associations only wanted stirring to make them shoot up into flame. In a moment of expansion Gibbon wrote off a warm and eager letter to his friend, setting forth his unsatisfactory position, and his wish and even necessity to change it. He gradually and with much delicacy discloses his plan, that he and Deyverdun, both now old bachelors, should combine their solitary lives in a common household and carry out an old project, often discussed in younger days, of living together. "You live in a charming house. I see from here my apartment, the rooms we shall share with one another, our table, our walks. But such a marriage is worthless unless it suits both parties, and I easily feel that circumstances, new tastes, and connections may frustrate a design which appeared charming in the distance. To settle my mind and to avoid regrets, you must be as frank as I have been, and give me a true picture, external and internal, of George Deyverdun."

This letter, written in fluent and perfect French, is one of the best that we have of Gibbon. Deyverdun answered promptly, and met his friend's advances with at least equal warmth. The few letters that have been preserved of his connected with this subject give a highly favourable idea of his mind and character, and show he was quite worthy of the long and constant attachment that Gibbon felt for him. He cannot express the delight he has felt at his friend's proposal; by the rarest piece of good fortune, it so happens that he himself is in a somewhat similar position of uncertainty and difficulty; a year ago Gibbon's letter would have

given him pleasure. now it offers assistance and support. After a few details concerning the tenant who occupies a portion of his house, he proceeds to urge Gibbon to carry out the project he had suggested, to break loose from parliament and politics, for which he was not fit, and to give himself up to the charms of study and friendship. "Call to mind, my dear friend," he goes on, "that I saw you enter parliament with regret, and I think I was only too good a prophet. I am sure that career has caused you more privations than joys, more pains than pleasures. Ever since I have known you I have been convinced that your happiness lay in your study and in society, and that any path which led you elsewhere was a departure from happiness." Through nine pages of gentle and friendly eloquence Deyverdun pursues his argument to induce his friend to clinch the bargain. "I advise you not only not to solicit a place, but to refuse one if it were offered to you. Would a thousand a year make up to you for the loss of five days a week? . . . . By making this retreat to Switzerland, besides the beauty of the country and the pleasures of its society, you will acquire two blessings which you have lost, liberty and competence. You will also be useful, your works will continue to enlighten us, and, independently of your talents, the man of honour and refinement is never useless." He then skilfully exhibits the attractions he has to offer. "You used to like my house and garden; what would you do now? On the first floor, which looks on the declivity of Ouchy, I have fitted up an apartment which is enough for me. I have a servant's room, two *salons*, two cabinets. On a level with the terrace two other *salons*, of which one serves as a dining-room in summer, and the other a drawing-room for company. I have arranged three more rooms between the house and the coachhouse, so that I can offer you all the large apartment, which consists actually of eleven rooms, great and small, looking east and south, not splendidly furnished, I allow, but with a certain elegance which I hope you will like. The terrace is but little altered . . . . it is lined from end to end with boxes of orange-trees. The vine-trellis has prospered, and extends nearly to the end. I have purchased the vineyard below the garden, and in front of the house made it into a lawn, which is watered by the water of the fountain . . . . In a word, strangers come to see the place, and in spite of my pompous description of it I think you will like it . . . . If you come, you will find a tranquillity which you cannot have in London, and a friend who has not passed a single day without thinking of you, and who, in spite of his defects, his foibles, and his inferiority, is still one of the companions who suits you best."

More letters followed from both sides in a similar strain. Yet Gibbon quailed before a final resolution. His aunt, Mrs. Porten, his mother, Mrs. Gibbon, his friend, Lord Sheffield, all joined in deprecating his voluntary exile. "That is a nonsensical scheme," said the latter, "you have got into your head of returning to Lausanne—a pretty fancy; you remember how much you liked it

in your youth, but now you have seen more of the world, and if you were to try it again you would find yourself woefully disappointed." Deyverdun, with complete sympathy, begged him not to be in too great a hurry to decide on a course which he himself desired so much. "I agree with you," he wrote to Gibbon, "that this is a sort of marriage, but I could never forgive myself if I saw you dissatisfied in the sequel, and in a position to reproach me." Gibbon felt it was a case demanding decision of character, and he came to a determination with a promptitude and energy not usual with him. He promised Deyverdun in the next letter an ultimatum, stating whether he meant to *go* or to *stay*, and a week after he wrote, "I go." He had prudently refrained from consulting Lord Sheffield during this critical period, knowing that his certain disapprobation of the scheme would only complicate matters and render decision more difficult. Then he wrote, "I have given Deyverdun my word of honor to be at Lausanne at the beginning of October, and no power of persuasion can divert me from this *irrevocable* resolution, which I am every day proceeding to execute."

This was no exaggeration. He cancelled the lease of his house in Bentinck Street, packed the more necessary portion of his books and shipped them for Rouen, and as his postchaise moved over Westminster Bridge, "bade a long farewell to the *fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ*." The only real pang he felt in leaving arose from the "silent grief" of his Aunt Porten, whom he did not hope to see again. Nor did he. He started on September 15, 1783, slept at Dover, was flattered with the hope of making Calais harbour by the same tide in "three hours and a half, as the wind was brisk and fair," but was driven into Boulogne. He had not a symptom of sea-sickness. Then he went on by easy stages through Aire, Bethune, Douay, Cambray, St. Quentin, La Fère, Laon, Rheims, Chalons, St. Dizier, Langres, Besançon, and arrived at Lausanne on the 27th. The inns he found more agreeable to the palate than to the sight or the smell. At Langres he had an excellent bed about six feet high from the ground. He beguiled the time with Homer and Clarendon, talking with his servant, Caplin, and his dog Muff, and sometimes with the French postilions, and he found them the least rational of the animals mentioned.

He reached his journey's end, to alight amid a number of minor troubles, which to a less easy tempered man would have been real annoyances. He found that Deyverdun had reckoned without his host, or rather his tenant, and that they could not have possession of the house for several months, so he had to take lodgings. Then he sprained his ankle, and this brought on a bad attack of the gout, which laid him up completely. However, his spirits never gave way. In time his books arrived, and the friends got installed in their own house. His satisfaction has then no bounds, with the people, the place, the way of living, and his daily companion. We must now leave him for a short space in the enjoyment of his happiness while we briefly consider the labours of the previous ten years

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST THREE VOLUMES OF THE DECLINE AND FALL.

THE historian who is also an artist is exposed to a particular drawback from which his brethren in other fields are exempt. The mere lapse of time destroys the value and even the fidelity of his pictures. In other arts correct colouring and outline remain correct, and if they are combined with imaginative power, age rather enhances than diminishes their worth. But the historian lives under another law. His reproduction of a past age, however full and true it may appear to his contemporaries, appears less and less true to his successors. The way in which he saw things ceases to be satisfactory; we may admit his accuracy, but we add a qualification referring to the time when he wrote, the point of view that he occupied. And we feel that what was accurate for him is no longer accurate for us. This superannuation of historical work is not similar to the superseding of scientific work which is ever going on, and is the capital test of progress. Scientific books become rapidly old-fashioned, because the science to which they refer is in constant growth, and a work on chemistry or biology is out of date by reason of incompleteness or the discovery of unsuspected errors. The scientific side of history, if we allow it to have a scientific side, conforms to this rule, and presents no singularity. Closer inspection of our materials, the employment of the comparative method, occasionally the bringing to light of new authorities—all contribute to an increase of real knowledge, and historical studies in this respect do not differ from other branches of research. But this is not the sole or the chief cause of the renovation and transformation constantly needed in historic work. That depends on the ever-moving standpoint from which the past is regarded, so that society in looking back on its previous history never sees it for long together at quite the same angle, never sees, we may say, quite the same thing. The past changes to us as we move down the stream of time, as a distant mountain changes through the windings of the road on which we travel away from it. To drop figure and use language now becoming familiar, the social organism is in constant growth, and receiving new additions, and each new addition causes us to modify our view of the whole. The historian, in fact, is engaged in the study

of an unfinished organism, whose development is constantly presenting him with surprises. It is as if the biologist were suddenly to come upon new and unheard-of species and families which would upset his old classification, or as if the chemist were to find his laws of combination replaced by others which were not only unknown to him, but which were really new and recent in the world. Other inquirers have the whole of the phenomena with which their science is concerned before them, and they may explore them at their leisure. The sociologist has only an instalment, most likely a very small instalment, of the phenomena with which his science is concerned before him. They have not yet happened, are not yet phenomena, and as they do happen and admit of investigation they necessarily lead to constant modification of his views and deductions. Not only does he acquire new knowledge like other inquirers, but he is constantly having the subject-matter from which he derives his knowledge augmented. Even in modern times society has thrown out with much suddenness rapid and unexpected developments, of such scope and volume that contemporaries have often lost self-possession at the sight of them, and wondered if social order could survive. The Reformation and the French Revolution are cases in point. And what a principal part do these two great events always play in any speculations instituted subsequent to them! How easy it is to see whether a writer lived before the Reign of Terror, or after it, from his gait and manner of approaching social inquiries! Is there any reason to suppose that such mutations are now at an end? None. The probability, well nigh a certainty, is that metamorphoses of the social organism are in store for us which will equal, if they do not vastly exceed, anything that the past has offered.

Considerations of this kind need to be kept in view if we would be just in our appreciation of historical writings which have already a certain age. It is impossible that a history composed a century ago should fully satisfy us now; but we must beware of blaming the writer for his supposed or real shortcomings, till we have ascertained how far they arose from his personal inadequacy to his task, and were not the result of his chronological position. It need not be said that this remark does not refer to many books which are called histories, but are really contemporary memoirs and original authorities subservient to history proper. The works of Clarendon and Burnet, for instance, can never lose a certain value on this account. The immortal book which all subsequent generations have agreed to call a possession for ever, is the unapproachable ideal of this class. But neither Thucydides nor Clarendon were historians in the sense in which Gibbon was an historian, that is, engaged in the delineation of a remote epoch by the help of such materials as have escaped the ravages of time. It is historians like Gibbon who are exposed to the particular unhappiness referred to a little way back—that of growing out of date through no fault of their own, but through the changed aspect presented by the past in consequence of the movement which has brought

us to the present. But if this is the field of historical disaster, it is also the opportunity of historical genius. In proportion as a writer transcends the special limitations of his time, will "age fail to wither him." That he cannot entirely shake off the fetters which fasten him to his epoch is manifest. But in proportion as his vision is clear, in proportion as he has with singleness of eye striven to draw the past with reverent loyalty, will his bondage to his own time be loosened, and his work will remain faithful work for which due gratitude will not be withheld.

The sudden and rapid expansion of historic studies in the middle of the eighteenth century constitutes one of the great epochs in literature. Up to the year 1750 no great historical work had appeared in any modern language.* The instances that seem to make against this remark will be found to confirm it. They consist of memoirs, contemporary documents, in short materials for history, but not history itself. From Froissart and De Comines, or even from the earlier monastic writers to St. Simon (who was just finishing his incomparable Memoirs), history with wide outlook and the conception of social progress and interconnection of events did not exist. Yet history in its simple forms is one of the most spontaneous of human achievements. Stories of mighty deeds, of the prowess and death of heroes, are among the earliest productions of even semi civilised man—the earliest subjects of epic and lyric verse. But this rudimentary form is never more than biographical. With increasing complexity of social evolution it dies away, and history proper, as distinct from annals and chronicle, does not arise till circumstances allow of general and synthetic views, till societies can be surveyed from a sufficient distance and elevation for their movements to be discerned. Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus do not appear till Greece and Rome have reached their highest point of homogeneous national life. The tardy dawn of history in the modern world was owing to its immense complexity. Materials also were wanting. They gradually emerged out of manuscript all over Europe, during what may be called the great pedant age (1550–1650), under the direction of meritorious antiquaries, Camden, Savile, Duchesne, Gale, and others. Still official documents and state papers were wanting, and had they been at hand would hardly have been used with competence. The national and religious limitations were still too marked and hostile to permit a free survey over the historic field. The eighteenth century, though it opened with a bloody war, was essentially peaceful in spirit: governments made war, but men and nations longed for rest. The increased interest in the past was shown by the publication nearly contemporary of the great historic collections of Rymer (A.D. 1704), Leibnitz (1707), and Muratori (1723). Before the middle of the century the historic muse had abundant oil to feed her lamp. Still the lamp would probably not have been

* Mézeray's great history of France is next to valueless till he reaches the sixteenth century, that was a period bordering on his own. Thuanus deals with contemporary events.

lighted but for the singular pass to which French thought had come.

From the latter years of Louis XIV. till the third quarter of the eighteenth century was all but closed, France had a government at once so weak and wicked, so much below the culture of the people it oppressed, that the better minds of the nation turned away in disgust from their domestic ignominy, and sought consolation in contemplating foreign virtue wherever they thought it was to be found; in short, they became cosmopolitan. The country which has since been the birthplace of Chauvinism, put away national pride almost with passion. But this was not all. The country whose king was called the Eldest Son of the Church, and with which untold pains had been taken to keep it orthodox, had lapsed into such an abhorrence of the Church and of orthodoxy that anything seemed preferable to them in its eyes.

Thus, as if by enchantment, the old barriers disappeared, both national and religious. Man and his fortunes, in all climes and all ages, became topics of intense interest, especially when they tended to degrade by contrast the detested condition of things at home. This was the weak side of historical speculation in France: it was essentially polemical; prompted less by genuine interest in the past than by strong hatred of the present. Of this perturbation note must be taken. But it is none the less true that the disengagement of French thought from the narrow limits of nation and creed produced, as it were in a moment, a lofty conception of history such as subsequent ages may equal, but can hardly surpass.

The influence of French thought was European, and nowhere more beneficial than in England. In other countries it was too despotic, and produced in Germany, at least, Lessing's memorable reaction. But the robust national and political life of England reduced it to a welcome flavouring of our insular temperament. The Scotch, who had a traditional connection with France, were the first importers of the new views. Hume, who had practically grown in the same soil as Voltaire, was only three years behind him in the historic field. The *Age of Louis XIV.* was published in 1751, and the first volume of the *History of England* in 1754. Hume was no disciple of Voltaire; he simply wrote under the stimulus of the same order of ideas. Robertson, who shortly followed him, no doubt drew direct inspiration from Voltaire, and his weightiest achievement, the View of the State of Europe, prefixed to his *History of Charles V.*, was largely influenced, if it was not absolutely suggested, by the *Essay on Manners*. But both Hume and Robertson surpassed their masters, if we allow, as seems right, that the French were their masters. The Scotch writers had no quarrel with their country or their age as the French had. One was a Tory, the other a Whig; and Hume allowed himself to be unworthily affected by party bias in his historical judgment. But neither was tempted to turn history into a covert attack on the condition of things amid which they lived. Hence a calmness and dignity of tone and language, very different from the petulant

brilliancy of Voltaire, who is never so happy as when he can make the past look mean and ridiculous, merely because it was the parent of the odious present. But, excellent as were the Scotch historians —Hume, in style nearly perfect ; Robertson, admirable for gravity and shrewd sense—they yet left much to be desired. Hume had despatched his five quartos, containing the whole history of England from the Roman period to the Revolution, in nine years. Considering that the subject was new to him when he began, such rapidity made genuine research out of the question. Robertson had the oddest way of consulting his friends as to what subject it would be advisable for him to treat, and was open to proposals from any quarter with exemplary impartiality ; this only showed how little the stern conditions of real historic inquiry were appreciated by him. In fact it is not doing them injustice to say that these eminent men were a sort of modern Livies, chiefly occupied with the rhetorical part of their work, and not over inclined to waste their time in ungrateful digging in the deep mines of historic lore. Obviously the place was open for a writer who should unite all the broad spirit of comprehensive survey, with the thorough and minute patience of a Benedictine ; whose subject, mellowed by long brooding, should have sought him rather than he it; whose whole previous course of study had been an unconscious preparation for one great effort which was to fill his life. When Gibbon sat down to write his book, the man had been found who united these difficult conditions.

The decline and fall of Rome is the greatest event in history. It occupied a larger portion of the earth's surface, it affected the lives and fortunes of a larger number of human beings, than any other revolution on record. For it was essentially one, though it took centuries to consummate, and though it had for its theatre the civilised world. Great evolutions and catastrophes happened before it, and have happened since, but nothing which can compare with it in volume and more physical size. Nor was it less morally. The destruction of Rome was not only a destruction of an empire, it was the destruction of a phase of human thought, of a system of human beliefs, of morals, politics, civilisation, as all these had existed in the world for ages. The drama is so vast, the cataclysm so appalling, that even at this day we are hardly removed from it far enough to take it fully in. The mind is oppressed, the imagination flags under the load imposed upon it. The capture and sack of a town one can fairly conceive : the massacre, outrage, the flaming roofs, the desolation. Even the devastation of a province can be approximately reproduced in thought. But what thought can embrace the devastation and destruction of all the civilised portions of Europe, Africa, and Asia ? Who can realise a Thirty Years War lasting five hundred years ? a devastation of the Palatinate extending through fifteen generations ? If we try to insert into the picture, as we undoubtedly should do, the founding of the new, which was going on beside this destruction of the old, the settling down of the barbarian hosts in the conquered provinces, the

expansion of the victorious Church, driving paganism from the towns to the country and at last extinguishing it entirely, the effort becomes more difficult than ever. The legend of the Seven Sleepers testifies to the need men felt, even before the tragedy had come to an end, to symbolize in a manageable form the tremendous changes they saw going on around them. But the legend only refers to the changes in religion. The fall of Rome was much more than that. It was the death of the old pagan world and the birth of the new Christian world—the greatest transition in history.

This, and no less than this, is Gibbon's subject.

He has treated it in such a way as even now fills competent judges with something like astonishment. His accuracy, coupled with the extraordinary range of his matter, the variety of his topics, the complexity of his undertaking, the fulness and thoroughness of his knowledge, never failing at any point over the vast field, the ease and mastery with which he lifts the enormous load, are appreciated in proportion to the information and abilities of his critic. One testimonial will suffice. Mr. Freeman says : " That Gibbon should ever be displaced seems impossible. That wonderful man monopolised, so to speak, the historical genius and the historical learning of a whole generation, and left little, indeed, of either for his contemporaries. He remains the one historian of the eighteenth century whom modern research has neither set aside nor threatened to set aside. We may correct and improve from the stores which have been opened since Gibbon's time ; we may write again large parts of his story from other and often truer and more wholesome points of view, but the work of Gibbon as a whole, as the encyclopædic history of 1300 years, as the grandest of historical designs, carried out alike with wonderful power and with wonderful accuracy, must ever keep its place. Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too."

Gibbon's immense scheme did not unfold itself to him at once : he passed through at least two distinct stages in the conception of his work. The original idea had been confined to the decline and fall of the city of Rome. Before he began to write, this had been expanded to the fall of the empire of the West. The first volume, which we saw him publish in the last chapter, was only an instalment, limited to the accession of Constantine, through a doubt as to how his labours would be received. The two following volumes, published in 1781, completed his primitive plan. Then he paused exactly a year before he resolved to carry on his work to its true end, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. The latter portion he achieved in three volumes more, which he gave to the world on his fifty-first birthday, in 1788. Thus the work naturally falls into two equal parts. It will be more convenient to disregard in our remarks the interval of five years which separated the publication of the first volume from its two immediate companions. The first three volumes constitute a whole in themselves, which we will now consider.

From the accession of Commodus, A.D. 180, to the last of the

Western Cæsars, A.D. 476, three centuries elapsed. The first date is a real point of departure, the commencement of a new stage of decay in the empire. The second is a mere official record of the final disappearance of a series of phantom sovereigns, whose vanishing was hardly noticed. Between these limits the empire passed from the autumnal calm of the Antonine period, through the dreadful century of anarchy between Pertinax and Diocletian, through the relative peace brought about by Diocletian's reforms, the civil wars of the sons of Constantine, the disastrous defeat of Julian, the calamities of the Gothic war, the short respite under Theodosius, the growing anarchy and misery under his incompetent sons, the three sieges of Rome and its sack by the Goths, the awful appearance of Attila and his Huns, the final submergence of the Western Empire under the barbarians, and the universal ruin which marked the close of the fifth century. This was the temporal side of affairs. On the spiritual, we have the silent occult growth of the early Church, the conversion of Constantine, the tremendous conflict of hostile sects, the heresy of Arius, the final triumph of Athanasius, the spread of monasticism, the extinction of paganism. Antiquity has ended, the middle ages have begun.

Over all this immense field Gibbon moves with a striking attitude of power, which arose from his consciousness of complete preparation. What there was to be known of his subject he felt sure that he knew. His method of treatment is very simple, one might say primitive, but it is very effective. He masters his materials, and then condenses and clarifies them into a broad, well-filled narrative, which is always or nearly always perfectly lucid through his skill in grouping events and characters, and his fine boldness in neglecting chronological sequence for the sake of clearness and unity of action. It is doing the book injustice to consult it only as a work of reference, or even to read it in detached portions. It should be read through, if we would appreciate the art with which the story is told. No part can be fairly judged without regard to the remainder. In fact, Gibbon was much more an artist than perhaps be suspected, and less of a philosophic thinker on history than he would have been willing to allow, His short-comings in this latter respect will be adverted to presently; we are now considering his merits. And among these the very high one of lofty and vigorous narrative stands pre-eminent. The campaigns of Julian, Belisarius, and Heraclius are painted with a dash and clearness which few civil historians have equalled. His descriptive power is also very great. The picture of Constantinople in the seventeenth chapter is, as the writer of these pages can testify, a wonderful achievement, both for fidelity and brilliancy, coming from a man who had never seen the place.

"If we survey Byzantium in the extent which it acquired with the august name of Constantinople, the figure of the imperial city may be represented under that of an unequal triangle. The obtuse point, which advances towards the east and the shores of Asia, meets and repels the

waves of the Thracian Bosphorus. The northern side of the city is bounded by the harbour; and the southern is washed by the Propontis, or Sea of Marmora. The basis of the triangle is opposed to the west, and terminates the continent of Europe. But the admirable form and division of the circumjacent land and water cannot, without a more ample explanation, be clearly or sufficiently understood.

The winding channel through which the waters of the Euxine flow with rapid and incessant course towards the Mediterranean received the appellation of Bosphorus, a name not less celebrated in the history than in the fables of antiquity. A crowd of temples and of votive altars, profusely scattered along its steep and woody banks, attested the unskilfulness, the terrors, and the devotion of the Grecian navigators, who, after the example of the Argonauts, explored the dangers of the inhospitable Euxine. On these banks tradition long preserved the memory of the palace of Phineus, infested by the obscene Harpies, and of the sylvan reign of Amycus, who defied the son of Leda to the combat of the cestus. The straits of the Bosphorus are terminated by the Cyanean rocks, which, according to the description of the poets, had once floated on the surface of the waters, and were destined by the gods to protect the entrance of the Euxine against the eye of profane curiosity. From the Cyanean rocks to the ruin and harbour of Byzantium the winding length of the Bosphorus extends about sixteen miles, and its most ordinary breadth may be computed at about one mile and a half. The *new* castles of Europe and Asia are constructed on either continent upon the foundations of two celebrated temples of Serapis and Jupiter Urius. The *old* castles, a work of the Greek emperors, command the narrowest part of the channel, in a place where the opposite banks advance within five hundred yards of each other. These fortresses were destroyed and strengthened by Mahomet the Second when he meditated the siege of Constantinople; but the Turkish conqueror was most probably ignorant that near two thousand years before his reign Darius had chosen the same situation to connect the two continents by a bridge of boats. At a small distance from the old castles we discover the little town of Chrysopolis or Scutari, which may almost be considered as the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople. The Bosphorus, as it begins to open into the Propontis, passes between Byzantium and Chalcedon. The latter of these two cities was built by the Greeks a few years before the former, and the blindness of its founders, who overlooked the superior advantages of the opposite coast, has been stigmatised by a proverbial expression of contempt.

"The harbour of Constantinople, which may be considered as an arm of the Bosphorus, obtained in a very remote period, the denomination of the *Golden Horn*. The curve which it describes might be compared to the horn of a stag, or as it should seem with more propriety, to that of an ox. The epithet of *golden* was expressive of the riches every wind wafted from the most distant countries into the secure and capacious port of Constantinople. The river Lycus, formed by the conflux of two little streams, pours into the harbour a perpetual supply of fresh water, which serves to cleanse the bottom and to invite the periodical shoals of fish to seek their retreat in that convenient recess. As the vicissitudes of the tides are scarcely felt in those seas, the constant depth of the harbour allows goods to be landed on the quays without the assistance of boats, and it has been observed that in many places the largest vessels may rest their prows against the houses while their sterns are floating in the water. From the mouth of the Lycus to that of the harbour, this arm of the Bosphorus is more than seven miles in length. The entrance is about five

hundred yards broad, and a strong chain could be occasionally drawn across it, to guard the port and the city from the attack of an hostile navy.

"Between the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, the shores of Europe and Asia receding on either side include the Sea of Marmora, which was known to the ancients by the denomination of the Propontis. The navigation from the issue of the Bosphorus to the entrance of the Hellespont is about one hundred and twenty miles. Those who steer their westward course through the middle of the Propontis may at once descry the highlands of Thrace and Bithynia and never lose sight of the lofty summit of Mount Olympus, covered with eternal snows. They leave on the left a deep gulf, at the bottom of which Nicomedia was seated, the imperial residence of Diocletian, and they pass the small islands of Cyzicus and Proconnesus before they cast anchor at Gallipoli, where the sea which separates Asia from Europe is again contracted to a narrow channel.

"The geographers, who with the most skilful accuracy have surveyed the form and extent of the Hellespont, assign about sixty miles for the winding course and about three miles for the ordinary breadth of those celebrated straits. But the narrowest part of the channel is found to the northward of the old Turkish castles between the cities of Sestos and Abydos. It was here that the adventurous Leander braved the passage of the flood for the possession of his mistress. It was here, likewise, in a place where the distance between the opposite banks cannot exceed five hundred paces, that Xerxes imposed a stupendous bridge of boats for the purpose of transporting into Europe an hundred and seventy myriads of barbarians. A sea contracted within such narrow limits may seem but ill to deserve the singular epithet of *broad*, which Homer, as well as Orpheus, has frequently bestowed on the Hellespont. But our ideas of greatness are of a relative nature; the traveller, and especially the poet, who sailed along the Hellespont, who pursued the windings of the stream and contemplated the rural scenery which appeared on every side to terminate the prospect, insensibly lost the remembrance of the sea, and his fancy painted those celebrated straits with all the attributes of a mighty river flowing with a swift current in the midst of a woody and inland country, and at length through a wide mouth discharging itself into the Ægean or Archipelago. Ancient Troy, seated on an eminence at the foot of Mount Ida, overlooked the mouth of the Hellespont, which scarcely received an accession of waters from the tribute of those immortal rivulets the Simois and Scamander. The Grecian camp had stretched twelve miles along the shore from the Sigæan to the Rhætian promontory, and the flanks of the army were guarded by the bravest chiefs who fought under the banners of Agamemnon. The first of these promontories was occupied by Achilles with his invincible Myrmidons, and the dauntless Ajax pitched his tents on the other. After Ajax had fallen a sacrifice to his disappointed pride and to the ingratitude of the Greeks, his sepulchre was erected on the ground where he had defended the navy against the rage of Jove and Hector, and the citizens of the rising town of Rhætium celebrated his memory with divine honours. Before Constantine gave a just preference to the situation of Byzantium he had conceived the design of erecting the seat of empire on this celebrated spot, from whence the Romans derived their fabulous origin. The extensive plain which lies below ancient Troy towards the Rhætian promontory was first chosen for his new capital; and though the undertaking was soon relinquished, the stately remains of unfinished walls and towers attracted the notice of all who sailed through the straits of the Hellespont.

"We are at present qualified to view the advantageous position of

Constantinople; which appears to have been formed by nature for the centre and capital of a great monarchy. Situated in the forty-first degree of latitude, the imperial city commanded from her seven hills the opposite shores of Europe and Asia; the climate was healthy and temperate; the soil fertile; the harbour secure and capacious; and the approach on the side of the continent was of small extent and easy defence. The Bosphorus and the Hellespont may be considered as the two gates of Constantinople, and the prince who possesses those important passages could always shut them against a naval enemy and open them to the fleets of commerce. The preservation of the eastern provinces may in some degree be ascribed to the policy of Constantine, as the barbarians of the Euxine, who in the preceding age had poured their armaments into the heart of the Mediterranean, soon desisted from the exercise of piracy, and despaired of forcing this insurmountable barrier. When the gates of the Hellespont and Bosphorus were shut, the capital still enjoyed within their spacious inclosure every production which could supply the wants or gratify the luxury of its numerous inhabitants. The sea-coasts of Thrace and Bithynia, which languish under the weight of Turkish oppression, still exhibit a rich prospect of vineyards, of gardens, and of plentiful harvests; and the Propontis has ever been renowned for an inexhaustible store of the most exquisite fish that are taken in their stated seasons without skill and almost without labour. But when the passages of the straits were thrown open for trade, they alternately admitted the natural and artificial riches of the north and south, of the Euxine and the Mediterranean. Whatever rude commodities were collected in the forests of Germany and Scythia, and as far as the sources of the Tanais and Borysthenes; whatsoever was manufactured by the skill of Europe or Asia, the corn of Egypt, the gems and spices of the furthest India, were brought by the varying winds into the port of Constantinople, which for many ages attracted the commerce of the ancient world.

"The prospect of beauty, of safety, and of wealth united in a single spot was sufficient to justify the choice of Constantine. But as some mixture of prodigy and fable has in every age been supposed to reflect a becoming majesty on the origin of great cities, the emperor was desirous of ascribing his resolution not so much to the uncertain counsels of human policy as to the eternal and infallible decrees of divine wisdom. In one of his laws he has been careful to instruct posterity that in obedience to the commands of God he laid the everlasting foundations of Constantinople, and though he has not condescended to relate in what manner the celestial inspiration was communicated to his mind, the defect of his modest silence has been liberally supplied by the ingenuity of succeeding writers, who describe the nocturnal vision which appeared to the fancy of Constantine as he slept within the walls of Byzantium. The tutelar genius of the city, a venerable matron sinking under the weight of years and infirmities, was suddenly transformed into a blooming maid, whom his own hands adorned with all the symbols of imperial greatness. The monarch awoke, interpreted the auspicious omen, and obeyed without hesitation the will of Heaven. The day which gave birth to a city or a colony was celebrated by the Romans with such ceremonies as had been ordained by a generous superstition; and though Constantine might omit some rites which savoured too strongly of their pagan origin, yet he was anxious to leave a deep impression of hope and respect on the minds of the spectators. On foot, with a lance in his hand, the emperor himself led the solemn procession: and directed the line which was traced as the boundary of the destined capital: till the growing circumference was observed with astonishment

by the assistants, who at length ventured to observe that he had already exceeded the most ample measure of a great city. 'I shall still advance,' replied Constantine, 'till HE the invisible Guide who marches before me, thinks proper to stop.'"

Gibbon proceeds to describe the extent, limits, and edifices of Constantinople. Unfortunately the limits of our space prevent us from giving more than a portion of his brilliant picture.

"In the actual state of the city the palace and gardens of the Seraglio occupy the eastern promontory, the first of the seven hills, and cover about one hundred and fifty acres of our own measure. The seat of Turkish jealousy and despotism is erected on the foundations of a Grecian republic: but it may be supposed that the Byzantines were tempted by the convenience of the harbour to extend their habitations on that side beyond the modern limits of the Seraglio. The new walls of Constantine stretched from the port to the Propontis across the enlarged breadth of the triangle, at the distance of fifteen stadia from the ancient fortifications: and with the city of Byzantium they inclosed five of the seven hills, which to the eyes of those who approach Constantinople appear to rise above each other in beautiful order. About a century after the death of the founder the new buildings, extending on one side up the harbour, and on the other the Propontis, already covered the narrow ridge of the sixth and the broad summit of the seventh hill. The necessity of protecting those suburbs from the incessant inroads of the barbarians engaged the younger Theodosius to surround his capital with an adequate and permanent inclosure of walls. From the eastern promontory to the Golden Gate, the extreme length of Constantinople was above three Roman miles; the circumference measured between ten and eleven; and the surface might be computed as equal to about two thousand English acres. It is impossible to justify the vain and credulous exaggerations of modern travellers, who have sometimes stretched the limits of Constantinople over the adjacent villages of the European and even Asiatic coasts. But the suburbs of Pera and Galata, though situate beyond the harbour, may deserve to be considered as a part of the city, and this addition may perhaps authorise the measure of a Byzantine historian, who assigns sixteen Greek (about sixteen Roman) miles for the circumference of his native city. Such an extent may seem not unworthy of an imperial residence. Yet Constantinople must yield to Babylon and Thebes, to ancient Rome, to London, and even to Paris . .

"Some estimate may be formed of the expense bestowed with imperial liberality on Constantinople, by the allowance of about two millions five hundred thousand pounds for the construction of the walls, the porticoes, and the aqueducts. The forests that overshadowed the shores of the Euxine, and the celebrated quarries of white marble in the little island of Proconnesus, supplied an inexhaustible stock of materials ready to be conveyed by the convenience of a short water carriage to the harbour of Byzantium. A multitude of labourers and artificers urged the conclusion of the work with incessant toil, but the impatience of Constantine soon discovered that in the decline of the arts the skill as well as the number of his architects bore a very unequal proportion to the greatness of his design. . . The buildings of the new city were executed by such artificers as the age of Constantine could afford, but they were decorated by the hands of the most celebrated masters of the age of Pericles and Alexander. . . . By Constantine's command the cities of Greece and Asia were despoiled of their most valuable ornaments. The trophies of memorable

wars, the objects of religious veneration, the most finished statues of the gods and heroes, of the sages and poets of ancient times, contributed to the splendid triumph of Constantinople.

". . . . The Circus, or Hippodrome, was a stately building of about four hundred paces in length and one hundred in breadth. The space between the two *metæ*, or goals, was filled with statues and obelisks, and we may still remark a very singular fragment of antiquity—the bodies of three serpents twisted into one pillar of brass. Their triple heads had once supported the golden tripod which, after the defeat of Xerxes, was consecrated in the temple of Delphi by the victorious Greeks. The beauty of the Hippodrome has been long since defaced by the rude hands of the Turkish conquerors; but, under the similar appellation of Atmeidan, it still serves as a place of exercise for their horses. From the throne whence the emperor viewed the Circensian games a winding staircase descended to the palace, a magnificent edifice, which scarcely yielded to the residence of Rome itself, and which, together with the dependent courts, gardens, and porticoes, covered a considerable extent of ground upon the banks of the Propontis between the Hippodrome and the church of St. Sophia. We might likewise celebrate the baths, which still retained the name of Zeuxippus, after they had been enriched by the magnificence of Constantine with lofty columns, various marbles, and above three score statues of bronze. But we should deviate from the design of this history if we attempted minutely to describe the different buildings or quarters of the city. . . . A particular description, composed about a century after its foundation, enumerates a capitol or school of learning, a circus, two theatres, eight public and one hundred and fifty-three private baths, fifty-two porticoes, five granaries, eight aqueducts or reservoirs of water, four spacious halls for the meeting of the senate or courts of justice, fourteen churches, fourteen palaces, and four thousand three hundred and eighty-eight houses, which for their size or beauty deserved to be distinguished from the multitude of plebeian habitations."

Gibbon's conception of history was that of a spacious panorama, in which a series of tableaux pass in succession before the reader's eye. He adverts but little, far too little, to that side of events which does not strike the visual sense. He rarely generalises or sums up a widely-scattered mass of facts into pregnant synthetic views. But possibly he owes some of the permanence of his fame to this very defect. As soon as ever a writer begins to support a thesis, to prove a point, he runs imminent danger of one-sidedness and partiality in his presentation of events. Gibbon's faithful transcript of the past has neither the merit nor the drawback of generalisation, and he has come in consequence to be regarded as a common mine of authentic facts to which all speculators can resort.

The first volume, which was received with such warm acclamation, is inferior to those that followed. He seems to have been partly aware of this himself, and speaks of the "concise and superficial narrative from Commodus to Alexander." But the whole volume lacks the grasp and easy mastery which distinguish its successors. No doubt the subject-matter was comparatively meagre and ungrateful. The century between Commodus and Diocletian was one long spasm of anarchy and violence, which was, as

Niebuhr said, incapable of historical treatment. The obscure confusion of the age is aggravated into almost complete darkness by the wretched materials which alone have survived, and the attempt to found a dignified narrative on such scanty and imperfect authorities was hardly wise. Gibbon would have shown a greater sense of historic proportion if he had passed over this period with a few bold strokes, and summed up with brevity such general results as may be fairly deduced. We may say of the first volume that it was tentative in every way. In it the author not only sounded his public, but he was also trying his instrument, running over the keys in preparatory search for the right note. He strikes it full and clear in the two final chapters on the Early Church; these, whatever objections may be made against them on other grounds, are the real commencement of the Decline and Fall.

From this point onwards he marches with the steady and measured tramp of a Roman legion. His materials improve both in number and quality. The fourth century, though a period of frightful anarchy and disaster if compared to a settled epoch, is a period of relative peace and order when compared to the third century. The fifth was calamitous beyond example; but ecclesiastical history comes to the support of secular history in a way which might have excited more gratitude in Gibbon than it did. From Constantine to Augustulus Gibbon is able to put forth all his strength. His style is less superfine, as his matter becomes more copious; and the more definite cleavage of events brought about by the separation between the Eastern and Western Empires, enables him to display the higher qualities which marked him as an historian.

The merit of his work, it is again necessary to point out, will not be justly estimated unless the considerations suggested at the beginning of this chapter be kept in view. We have to remember that his culture was chiefly French, and that his opinions were those which prevailed in France in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He was the friend of Voltaire, Helvétius, and D'Holbach; that is, of men who regarded the past as one long nightmare of crime, imposture and folly, instigated by the selfish machinations of kings and priests. A strong infusion of the spirit which animated not only Voltaire's *Essay on Manners*, but certain parts of Hume's *History of England* might have been expected as a matter of course. It is essentially absent. Gibbon's private opinions may have been what they will, but he has approved his high title to the character of an historian by keeping them well in abeyance. When he turned his eyes to the past and viewed it with intense gaze, he was absorbed in the spectacle, his peculiar prejudices were hushed, he thought only of the object before him and of reproducing it as well as he could. This is not the common opinion, but, nevertheless, a great deal can be said to support it.

It will be as well to take two concrete tests—his treatment of two topics which of all others were most likely to betray him into deviations from historic candour. If he stands these, he may be

admitted to stand any less severe. Let them be his account of Julian, and his method of dealing with Christianity.

The snare that was spread by Julian's apostasy for the philosl ophers of the last century, and their haste to fall into it, are well-known. The spectacle of a philosopher on the throne who pro claimed toleration, and contempt for Christianity, was too tempting and too useful controversially to allow of much circumspection in handling it. The odious comparisons it offered were so exactly what was wanted for depreciating the Most Christian king and his courtly Church, that all further inquiry into the apostate's merits seemed useless. Voltaire finds that Julian had all the qualities of Trajan without his defects; all the virtues of Cato without his ill humour; all that one admires in Julius Cæsar without his vices: he had the continency of Scipio, and was in all ways equal to Marcus Aurelius, the first of men. Nay, more. If he had only lived longer, he would have retarded the fall of the Roman Empire, if he could not arrest it entirely. We here see the length to which "polemical fury" could hurry a man of rare insight. Julian had been a subject of contention for years between the hostile factions. While one party made it a point of honour to prove that he was a monster, warring consciously against the Most High, the other was equally determined to prove that he was a paragon of all virtue, by reason of his enmity to the Christian religion. The deep interest attaching to the pagan reaction in the fourth century, and the social and moral problems it suggests, were perceived by neither side, and it is not difficult to see why they were not. The very word reaction, in its modern sense, will hardly be found in the eighteenth century, and the thing that it expresses was very imperfectly conceived. We, who have been surrounded by reactions, real or supposed, in politics, in religion, in philosophy, recognise an old acquaintance in the efforts of the limited, intense Julian to stem the tide of progress as represented in the Christian Church. It is a fine instance of the way in which the ever-unfolding present is constantly lighting up the past. Julian and his party were the Ultramontanes of their day in matters of religion, and the Romantics in matters of literature. Those radical innovators and reformers, the Christians, were marching from conquest to conquest, over the old faith, making no concealment of their revolutionary aims and intentions to wipe out the past as speedily as possible. The conservatives of those times, after long despising the reformers, passed easily to fearing them and hating them as their success became threatening. "The attachment to paganism," says Neander, "lingered especially in many of the ancient and noble families of Greece and Rome." Old families, or new rich ones who wished to be thought old, would be sure to take up the cause of ancestral wisdom as against modern innovation. Before Julian came to the throne, a pagan reaction was imminent, as Neander points out. Julian himself was a remarkable man, as men of his class usually are. In the breaking up of old modes of belief, as Mill has said, "the most strong-minded and discerning, next to

those who head the movement, are generally those who bring up the rear." The energy of his mind and character was quite exceptional, and if we reflect that he only reigned sixteen months, and died in his thirty-second year, we must admit that the mark he has left in history is very surprising. He and his policy are now discussed with entire calm by inquirers of all schools, and sincere Christians like Neander and Dean Milman are as little disposed to attack him with acrimony, as those of a different way of thought are inclined to make him a subject of unlimited panegyric.

Through this difficult subject Gibbon has found his way with a prudence and true insight which extorted admiration, even in his own day. His account of Julian is essentially a modern account. The influence of his private opinions can hardly be traced in the brilliant chapters that he has devoted to the Apostate. He sees through Julian's weaknesses in a way in which Voltaire never saw or cared to see. His pitiful superstition, his huge vanity, his weak affectation are brought out with an incisive clearness and subtle penetration into character which Gibbon was not always so ready to display. At the same time he does full justice to Julian's real merits. And this is perhaps the most striking evidence of his penetration. An error on the side of injustice to Julian is very natural in a man who, having renounced allegiance to Christianity, yet fully realises the futility of attempting to arrest it in the fourth century. A certain intellectual disdain for the reactionary emperor is difficult to avoid. Gibbon surmounts it completely, and he does so, not in consequence of a general conception of the reactionary spirit, as a constantly emerging element in society, but by sheer historical insight, clear vision of the fact before him. It may be added that nowhere is Gibbon's command of vivid narrative seen to greater advantage than in the chapters that he has devoted to Julian. The daring march from Gaul to Illyricum is told with immense spirit; but the account of Julian's final campaign and death in Persia is still better, and can hardly be surpassed. It has every merit of clearness and rapidity, yet is full of dignity, which culminates in this fine passage referring to the night before the emperor received his mortal wound.

"While Julian struggled with the almost insuperable difficulties of his situation, the silent hours of the night were still devoted to study and contemplation. Whenever he closed his eyes in short and interrupted slumbers, his mind was agitated by painful anxiety; nor can it be thought surprising that the Genius of the empire should once more appear before him, covering with a funereal veil his head and his horn of abundance, and slowly retiring from the Imperial tent. The monarch started from his couch, and, stepping forth to refresh his wearied spirits with the coolness of the midnight air, he beheld a fiery meteor, which shot athwart the sky and suddenly vanished. Julian was convinced that he had seen the menacing countenance of the god of war: the council which he summoned, of Tuscan Haruspices, unanimously pronounced that he should abstain from action; but on this occasion necessity

and reason were more prevalent than superstition, and the trumpets sounded at the break of day." *

It will not be so easy to absolve Gibbon from the charge of prejudice in reference to his treatment of the Early Church. It cannot be denied that in the two famous chapters, at least, which concluded his first volume, he adopted a tone which must be pronounced offensive, not only from the Christian point of view, but on the broad ground of historical equity. His preconceived opinions were too strong for him on this occasion, and obstructed his generally clear vision. Yet a distinction must be made. The offensive tone in question is confined to these two chapters. We need not think that it was in consequence of the clamour they raised that he adopted a different style with reference to church matters in his subsequent volumes. A more creditable explanation of his different tone, which will be presently suggested, is at least as probable. In any case, these two chapters remain the chief slur on his historical impartiality, and it is worth while to examine what his offence amounts to.

Gibbon's account of the early Christians is vitiated by his narrow and distorted conception of the emotional side of man's nature. Having no spiritual aspirations himself, he could not appreciate or understand them in others. Those emotions which have for their object the unseen world and its centre, God, had no meaning for him; and he was tempted to explain them away when he came across them, or to ascribe their origin and effects to other instincts which were more intelligible to him. The wonderland which the mystic inhabits was closed to him, he remained outside of it and reproduced in sarcastic travesty the reports he heard of its marvels. What he has called the secondary causes of the growth of Christianity, were much rather its effects. The first is "the inflexible and intolerant zeal of the Christians" and their abhorrence of idolatry. With great power of language, he paints the early Christian "encompassed with infernal snares in every convivial entertainment, as often as his friends, invoking the hospitable deities, poured out libations to each other's happiness. When the bride, struggling with well affected reluctance, was forced in hymenæal pomp over the threshold of her new habitation, or when the sad procession of the dead slowly moved towards the funeral pile, the Christian on these interesting occasions was compelled to desert the persons who were dearest to him, rather than contract the guilt inherent in those impious ceremo-

* It is interesting to compare Gibbon's admirable picture with the harsh original Latin of his authority, Ammianus Marcellinus. "Ipse autem ad sollicitam suspensamque quietem paullisper protractus, cum somno (ut solebat) depulso, ad æmulationem Cæsaris Julii quædam sub pellibus scribens, obscuro noctis altitudine sensus cujusdam philosophi teneretur, vidit squalidius, ut confessus est proximis, speciem illam Genii publici, quam quum ad Augustum surgeret culmen, conspexit in Galliis, velata cum capite cornucopia per aulæa tristius discedentem. Et quamquam ad momentum hæsit, stupore defixus, omni tamen superior metu, ventura decretis cælestibus commendabat; relicto humi strato cubili, adulta jam excitus nocte, et numinibus per sacra depulsoria supplicans, flagrantissimam facem cadenti similem visam, aëris parte sulcata evanuisse existimavit: horroreque perfusus est, ne ita aperte minax Martis adparuerit sidus."—*Amm. Marc.* lib. xxv. cap. 2.

nies." It is strange that Gibbon did not ask himself what was the cause of this inflexible zeal. The zeal produced the effects alleged, but what produced the zeal? He says that it was derived from the Jewish religion, but neglects to point out what could have induced Gentiles of every diversity of origin to derive from a despised race tenets and sentiments which would make their lives one long scene of self-denial and danger. The whole vein of remark is so completely out of date, that it is not worth dwelling on, except very summarily.

The second cause is "the doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth." Again we have an effect treated as a cause. "The ancient Christians were animated by a contempt for their present existence, and by a just confidence of immortality." Very true; but the fact of their being so animated was what wanted explaining. Gibbon says it "was no wonder that so advantageous an offer" as that of immortality was accepted. Yet he had just before told us that the ablest orators at the bar and in the senate of Rome, could expose this offer of immortality to ridicule without fear of giving offence. Whence arose, then, the sudden blaze of conviction with which the Christians embraced it?

The third cause is the miraculous powers *ascribed* to the primitive Church. Gibbon apparently had not the courage to admit that he agreed with his friend Hume in rejecting miracles altogether. He conceals his drift in a cloud of words, suggesting indirectly with innuendo and sneer his real opinion. But this does not account for the stress he lays on the *ascription* of miracles. He seems to think that the claim of supernatural gifts somehow had the same efficacy as the gifts themselves would have had, if they had existed.

The fourth cause is the virtues of the primitive Christians. The paragraphs upon it, Dean Milman considers the most uncandid in all the history, and they certainly do Gibbon no credit. With a strange ignorance of the human heart, he attributes the austere morals of the early Christians to their care for their reputation. The ascetic temper, one of the most widely manifested in history, was beyond his comprehension.

The fifth cause was the union and discipline of the Christian republic. For the last time the effect figures as the cause. Union and discipline we know are powerful, but we know also that they are the result of deep antecedent forces, and that prudence and policy alone never produced them.

It can surprise no one that Gibbon has treated the early Church in a way which is highly unsatisfactory if judged by a modern standard. Not only is it a period which criticism has gone over again and again with a microscope, but the standpoint from which such periods are observed has materially changed since his day. That dim epoch of nascent faith, full of tender and subdued tints, with a high light on the brows of the Crucified, was not one in which he could see clearly, or properly see at all. He has as little

insight into the religious condition of the pagan world, as of the Christian. It is singular how he passes over facts which were plain before him, which he knew quite well, as he knew nearly everything connected with his subject, but the real signficance of which he missed. Thus he attributes to the scepticism of the pagan world the easy introduction of Christianity. Misled by the "eloquence of Cicero and the wit of Lucian," he supposes the second century to have been vacant of beliefs, in which a "fashion of incredulity" was widely diffused, and "many were almost disengaged from artificial prejudices." He was evidently unaware of the striking religious revival which uplifted paganism in the age of Hadrian, and grew with the sinking empire: the first stirrings of it may even be discerned in Tacitus, and go on increasing till we reach the theurgy of the Neoplatonists. A growing fear of the gods, a weariness of life and longing for death, a disposition to look for compensation for the miseries of this world to a brighter one beyond the grave—these traits are common in the literature of the second century, and show the change which had come over the minds of men. Gibbon is colour-blind to these shades of the religious spirit: he can only see the banter of Lucian.* In reference to these matters he was a true son of his age, and could hardly be expected to transcend it.

He cannot be cleared of this reproach. On the other hand, we must remember that Gibbon's hard and accurate criticism set a good example in one respect. The fertile fancy of the middle ages had run into wild exaggerations of the number of the primitive martyrs, and their legends had not always been submitted to impartial scrutiny even in the eighteenth century. We may admit that Gibbon was not without bias of another kind, and that his tone is often very offensive when he seeks to depreciate the evidence of the sufferings of the early confessors. His computation, which will allow of "an annual consumption of a hundred and fifty martyrs," is nothing short of cynical. Still he did good service in insisting on chapter and verse and fair historical proof of these frightful stories, before they were admitted. Dean Milman acknowledges so much, and defends him against the hot zeal of M. Guizot, justly adding that "truth must not be sacrificed even to well grounded moral indignation," in which sentiment all now will no doubt be willing to concur.

The difference between the Church in the Catacombs, and the Church in the Palaces at Constantinople or Ravenna, measures the difference between Gibbon's treatment of early Christian history and his treatment of ecclesiastical history. Just as the simple-hearted emotions of God-fearing men were a puzzle and an irritation to him, so he was completely at home in exposing the intrigues of courtly bishops and in the metaphysics of theological controversy. His mode of dealing with Church matters from this point

* On the religious revival of the second century, see Hausrath's *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*, vol. iii., especially the sections, "Hadrian's Mysticismus" and "Religiöse Tendenzen in Kunst und Literatur," where this interesting subject is handled with a freshness and insight quite remarkable.

onward is hardly ever unfair, and has given rise to few protestations. He has not succeeded in pleasing everybody. What Church historian ever does ? But he is candid, impartial, and discerning. His account of the conversion of Constantine is remarkably just. and he is more generous to the first Christian Emperor than Niebuhr or Neander. He plunges into the Arian controversy with manifest delight, and has given in a few pages one of the clearest and most memorable *résumés* of that great struggle. But it is when he comes to the hero of that struggle, to an historic character who can be seen with clearness, that he shows his wonted tact and insight. A great man hardly ever fails to awaken Gibbon into admiration and sympathy. The " Great Athanasius," as he often calls him, caught his eye at once, and the impulse to draw a fine character promptly silenced any prejudices which might interfere with faithful portraiture. "Athanasius stands out more grandly in Gibbon, than in the pages of the orthodox ecclesiastical historians "—Dr. Newman has said,—a judge whose competence will not be questioned. And as if to show how much insight depends on sympathy, Gibbon is immediately more just and open to the merits of the Christian community, than he had been hitherto. He now sees "that the privileges of the Church had already revived a sense of order and freedom in the Roman government." His chapter on the rise of monasticism is more fair and discriminating than the average Protestant treatment of that subject. He distinctly acknowledges the debt we owe the monks for their attention to agriculture, the useful trades, and the preservation of ancient literature. The more disgusting forms of asceticism he touches with light irony, which is quite as effective as the vehement denunciations of non-Catholic writers. It must not be forgotten that his ecclesiastical history derives a great superiority of clearness and proportion by its interweaving with the general history of the times, and this fact of itself suffices to give Gibbon's picture a permanent value even beside the master works of German erudition which have been devoted exclusively to Church matters. If we lay down Gibbon and take up Neander, for instance, we are conscious that with all the greater fulness of detail, engaging candour, and sympathetic insight of the great Berlin Professor, the general impression of the times is less distinct and lasting. There is no specialism in Gibbon ; his book is a broad sociological picture in which the whole age is portrayed.

To sum up. In two memorable chapters Gibbon has allowed his prejudices to mar his work as an historian. But two chapters out of seventy-one constitute a small proportion. In the remainder of his work he is as free from bias and unfairness as human frailty can well allow. The annotated editions of Milman and Guizot are guarantees of this. Their critical animadversions become very few and far between after the first volume is passed. If he had been animated by a polemical object in writing ; if he had used the past as an arsenal from which to draw weapons to attack the present, we may depend that a swift blight would have shrivelled his labours, as it did so many famous works of the eighteenth cen-

tury, when the great day of reaction set in. His mild rebuke of the Abbé Raynal should not be forgotten. He admired the *History of the Indies*. It is one of the few books that he has honoured with mention and praise in the text of his own work. But he points out that the "zeal of the philosophic historian for the rights of mankind" had led him into a blunder. It was not only Gibbon's scholarly accuracy which saved him from such blunders. Perhaps he had less zeal for the rights of mankind than men like Raynal, whose general views he shared. But it is certain that he did not write with their settled *parti pris* of making history a vehicle of controversy. His object was to be a faithful historian, and due regard being had to his limitations, he attained to it.

If we now consider the defects of the *Decline and Fall*—which the progress of historic study, and still more the lapse of time, have gradually rendered visible, they will be found, as was to be expected, to consist in the author's limited conception of society, and of the multitudinous forces which mould and modify it. We are constantly reminded by the tone of remark that he sees chiefly the surface of events, and that the deeper causes which produce them have not been seen with the same clearness. In proportion as an age is remote, and therefore different from that in which a historian writes, does it behove him to remember that the social and general side of history is more important than the individual and particular. In reference to a period adjacent to our own the fortunes of individuals properly take a prominent place, the social conditions amid which they worked are familiar to us, and we understand them and their position without effort. But with regard to a remote age the case is different. Here our difficulty is to understand the social conditions, so unlike those with which we are acquainted, and as society is greater than man, so we feel that society, and not individual men, should occupy the chief place in the picture. Not that individuals are to be suppressed or neglected, but their subordination to the large historic background must be well maintained. The social, religious, and philosophic conditions amid which they played their parts should dominate the scene, and dwarf by their grandeur and importance the human actors who move across it. The higher historical style now demands what may be called compound narrative, that is narrative having reference to two sets of phenomena—one the obvious surface events, the other the larger and wider, but less obvious, sociological condition. A better example could hardly be given than Grote's account of the mutilation of the Hermæ. The fact of the mutilation is told in the briefest way in a few lines, but the social condition which overarched it, and made the disfiguring of a number of half-statues "one of the most extraordinary events in Greek history," demands five pages of reflections and commentary to bring out its full significance. Grote insists on the duty "to take reasonable pains to realise in our minds the religious and political associations of the Athenians," and helps us to do it by a train of argument and illustration. The larger part of the strength of the modern historical school lies in this method and in able hands it has produced great results.

It would be unfair to compare Gibbon to these writers. They had a training in social studies which he had not. But it is not certain that he has always acquitted himself well, even if compared to his contemporaries and predecessors, Montesquieu, Mably, and Voltaire. In any case his narrative is generally wanting in historic perspective and suggestive background. It adheres closely to the obvious surface of events with little attempt to place behind them the deeper sky of social evolution. In many of his crowded chapters one cannot see the wood for the trees. The story is not lifted up and made lucid by general points of view, but drags or hurries along in the hollow of events, over which the author never seems to raise himself into a position of commanding survey. The thirty-sixth chapter is a marked instance of this defect. But the defect is general. The vigorous and skilful narrative, and a certain grandeur and weightiness of language, make us overlook it. It is only when we try to attain clear and succinct views, which condense into portable propositions the enormous mass of facts collected before us, that we feel that the writer has not often surveyed his subject from a height and distance sufficient to allow the great features of the epoch to be seen in bold outline. By the side of the history of concrete events, we miss the presentation of those others which are none the less events for being vague, irregular, and wide-reaching, and requiring centuries for their accomplishment. Gibbon's manner of dealing with the first is always good, and sometimes consummate, and equal to anything in historical literature. The thirty-first chapter, with its description of Rome, soon to fall a prey to the Goths and Alaric, is a masterpiece, artistic and spacious in the highest degree; though it is unnecessary to cite particular instances, as nearly every chapter contains passages of admirable historic power. But the noble flood of narrative never stops in meditative pause to review the situation, and point out with pregnant brevity what is happening in the sum total, abstraction made of all confusing details. Besides the facts of the time, we seek to have the tendencies of the age brought before us in their flow and expansion, the filiation of events over long periods deduced in clear sequence, a synoptical view which is to the mind what a picture is to the eye. In this respect Gibbon's method leaves not a little to be desired.

Take for instance two of the most important aspects of the subject that he treated: the barbarian invasions, and the cause of the decline and fall of the Roman empire. To the concrete side of both he has done ample justice. The rational and abstract side of neither has received the attention from him which it deserved. On the interesting question of the introduction of the barbarians into the frontier provinces, and their incorporation into the legions, he never seems to have quite made up his mind. In the twelfth chapter he calls it a "great and beneficial plan." Subsequently he calls it a disgraceful and fatal expedient. He recurs frequently to the subject in isolated passages, but never collects the facts into a focus, with a view of deducing their real meaning. Yet the

point is second to none in importance. Its elucidation throws more light on the fall of Rome than any other considerations whatever. The question is, Whether Rome was conquered by the barbarians in the ordinary sense of the word, conquered. We know that it was not, and Gibbon knew that it was not. Yet perhaps most people rise from reading his book with an impression that the empire succumbed to the invasion of the barbarians, as Carthage, Gaul, and Greece had succumbed to the invasion of the Romans; that the struggle lay between classic Rome and outside uncivilised foes; and that after two centuries of hard fighting the latter were victorious. The fact that the struggle lay between barbarians, who were within and friendly to the empire, and barbarians who were without it, and hostile rather to their more fortunate brethren, than to the empire which employed them, is implicitly involved in Gibbon's narrative, but it is not explicitly brought out. Romanised Goths, Vandals, and Franks were the defenders, nearly the only defenders, of the empire against other tribes and nations who were not Romanised, and nothing can be more plain than that Gibbon saw this as well as any one since, but he has not set it forth with prominence and clearness. With his complete mastery of the subject he would have done it admirably, if he had assumed the necessary point of view.

Similarly, with regard to the causes of the fall of the empire. It is quite evident that he was not at all unconscious of the deep economic and social vices which undermined the great fabric. Depopulation, decay of agriculture, fiscal oppression, the general prostration begotten of despotism—all these sources of the great collapse may be traced in his text, or his wonderful notes, hinted very often with a flashing insight which anticipates the most recent inquiries into the subject. But these considerations are not brought together to a luminous point, nor made to yield clear and tangible results. They lie scattered, isolated, and barren over three volumes, and are easily overlooked. One may say that generalised and synthetic views are conspicuous by their absence in Gibbon.

But what of that? These reflections, even if they be well founded, hardly dim the majesty of the *Decline and Fall.* The book is such a marvel of knowledge at once wide and minute, that even now, after numbers of labourers have gone over the same ground, with only special objects in view, small segments of the great circle which Gibbon fills alone, his word is still one of the weightiest that can be quoted. Modern research has unquestionably opened out points of view to which he did not attain. But when it comes to close investigation of any particular question, we rarely fail to find that he has seen it, dropped some pregnant hint about it, more valuable than the dessertations of other men. As Mr. Freeman says, "Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST TEN YEARS OF HIS LIFE IN LAUSANNE.

AFTER the preliminary troubles which met him on his arrival at Lausanne, Gibbon had four years of unbroken calm and steady work, of which there is nothing to record beyond the fact that they were filled with peaceful industry. "One day," he wrote, "glides by another in tranquil uniformity." During the whole period he never stirred ten miles out of Lausanne. He had nearly completed the fourth volume before he left England. Then came an interruption of a year—consumed in the break-up of his London establishment, his journey, the transport of his library, the delay in getting settled at Lausanne. Then he sat down in grim earnest to finish his task, and certainly the speed he used, considering the quality of the work, left nothing to be desired. He achieved the fifth volume in twenty-one months, and the sixth in little more than a year. He had hoped to finish sooner, but it is no wonder that he found his work grow under his hands when he passed from design to execution. "A long while ago, when I contemplated the distant prospect of my work," he writes to Lord Sheffield, "I gave you and myself some hopes of landing in England last autumn; but alas! when autumn grew near, hills began to rise on hills, Alps on Alps, and I found my journey far more tedious and toilsome than I had imagined. When I look back on the length of the undertaking and the variety of materials, I cannot accuse or suffer myself to be accused of idleness; yet it appeared that unless I doubled my diligence, another year, and perhaps more, would elapse before I could embark with my complete manuscript. Under these circumstances I took, and am still executing, a bold and meritorious resolution. The mornings in winter, and in a country of early dinners, are very concise. To them, my usual period of study, I now frequently add the evenings, renounce cards and society, refuse the most agreeable evenings, or perhaps make my appearance at a late supper. By this extraordinary industry, which I never practised before, and to which I hope never to be again reduced, I see the last part of my history growing apace under my hands." He was indeed, as he said, now straining for the goal which was at last reached "on the day, or rather the night, of the 27th of June, 1787. Between the hours of eleven and twelve I wrote the last lines of

the last page in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."

A faint streak of poetry occasionally shoots across Gibbon's prose. But both prose and poetry had now to yield to stern business. The printing of three quarto volumes in those days of handpresses was a formidable undertaking, and unless expedition were used the publishing season of the ensuing year would be lost. A month had barely elapsed before Gibbon with his precious cargo started for England. He went straight to his printers. The printing of the fourth volume occupied three months, and both author and publisher were warned that their common interest required a quicker pace. Then Mr. Strahan "fulfilled his engagement, which few printers could sustain, of delivering every week three thousand copies of nine sheets." On the 8th of May, 1788, the three concluding volumes were published, and Gibbon had discharged his debt for the entertainment that he had had in this world.

He returned as speedily as he could to Lausanne, to rest from his labours. But he had a painful greeting in the sadly altered look of his friend Deyverdun. Soon an apoplectic seizure confirmed his forebodings, and within a twelvemonth the friend of his youth, whom he had loved for thirty-three years, was taken away by death (July 4, 1789).*

Gibbon never got over this loss. His staid and solid nature was not given to transports of joy or grief. But his constant references to "poor Deyverdun," and the vacancy caused by his loss, show the depth of the wound. "I want to change the scene," he writes, "and, beautiful as the garden and prospect must appear to every eye, I feel that the state of my mind casts a gloom over them: every spot, every walk, every bench recalls the memory of those hours, those conversations, which will return no more. . . . I almost hesitate whether I shall run over to England to consult with you on the spot, and to fly from poor Deyverdun's shade, which meets me at every turn." Not that he lacked attached friends, and of mere society and acquaintance he had more than abundance. He occupied at Lausanne a position of almost patriarchal

* The letter in which Gibbon communicated the sad news to Lord Sheffield was written on the 14th July, 1789, the day of the taking of the Bastille. So "that evening sun of July" sent its beams on Gibbon mourning the dead friend, as well as on "reapers amid peaceful woods and fields, on old women spinning in cottages, on ships far out on the silent main, on balls at the Orangerie of Versailles, where high-rouged dames of the palace are even now dancing with double-jacketed Hussar officers."

dignity, "and may be said," writes Lord Sheffield, "to have almost given the law to a set of as willing subjects as any man ever presided over." Soon the troubles in France sent wave after wave of emigrants over the frontiers, and Lausanne had its full share of the exiles. After a brief approval of the reforms in France he passed rapidly to doubt, disgust, and horror at the "new birth of time" there. "You will allow me to be a tolerable historian," he wrote to his stepmother, "yet on a fair review of ancient and modern times I can find none that bear any affinity to the present." The last social evolution was beyond his power of classification. The mingled bewilderment and anger with which he looks out from Lausanne on the revolutionary welter, form an almost amusing contrast to his usual apathy on political matters. He is full of alarm lest England should catch the revolutionary fever. He is delighted with Burke's *Reflections*. "I admire his eloquence, I approve his politics, I adore his chivalry, and I can forgive even his superstition." His wrath waxes hotter at every post. "Poor France! The state is dissolved! the nation is mad." At last nothing but vituperation can express his feelings, and he roundly calls the members of the Convention "devils," and discovers that "democratical principles lead by a path of flowers into the abyss of hell."

In 1790 his friends the Neckers had fled to Switzerland, and on every ground of duty and inclination he was called upon to show them the warmest welcome, and he did so in a way that excited their liveliest gratitude. Necker was cast down in utter despair, not only for the loss of place and power, but on account of the strong animosity which was shown to him by the exiled French, none of whom would set their foot in his house. The Neckers were now Gibbon's chief inmates till the end of his sojourn in Switzerland. They lived at Coppet, and constant visits were exchanged there and at Lausanne. Madame Necker wrote to him frequent letters, which prove that if she had ever had any grievance to complain of in the past, it was not only forgiven, but entirely forgotten. The letters, indeed, testify a warmth of sentiment on her part which, coming from a lady of less spotless propriety, would almost imply a revival of youthful affection for her early lover. "You have always been dear to me," she writes, "but the friendship you have shown to M. Necker adds to that which you inspire me with on so many grounds, and I love you at present with a double affection."—"Come to us when you are restored to health and to yourself; that moment should always belong to your first and your last friend (*amie*). and I do not know which of those titles is the sweetest and dearest to my heart."—"Near you, the recollections you recalled were pleasant to me, and you connected them easily with present impressions; the chain of years seemed to link all times together with electrical rapidity; you were at once twenty and fifty years old for me. Away from you the different places which I have inhabited are only the milestones of my life, telling me of the distance I have come." With much more in the same strain. Of Madame de Staël Gibbon does not speak in very

warm praise. Her mother, who was far from being contented with her, may perhaps have prejudiced him against her. In one letter to him she complains of her daughter's conduct in no measured terms. Yet Gibbon owns that Madame de Staël was a "pleasant little woman;" and in another place says that she was "wild, vain, but good-natured, with a much larger provision of wit than of beauty." One wonders if he ever knew of her childish scheme of marrying him in order that her parents might have the pleasure of his company and conversation.

These closing years of Gibbon's life were not happy, through no fault of his. No man was less inclined by disposition to look at the dark side of things. But heavy blows fell on him in quick succession. His health was seriously impaired, and he was often laid up for months with the gout. His neglect of exercise had produced its effect, and he had become a prodigy of unwieldy corpulency. Unfortunately his digestion seems to have continued too good, and neither his own observation nor the medical science of that day sufficed to warn him against certain errors of regimen which were really fatal. All this time, while the gout was constantly torturing him, he drank Madeira freely. There is frequent question of a pipe of that sweet wine in his correspondence with Lord Sheffield. He cannot bear the thought of being without a sufficient supply, as "good Madeira is now become essential to his health and reputation." The last three years of his residence at Lausanne were agitated by perpetual anxiety and dread of an invasion of French democratic principles, or even of French troops. Reluctance to quit "his paradise" keeps him still, but he is always wondering how soon he will have to fly, and often regrets that he has not done so already. "For my part," he writes, "till Geneva falls, I do not think of a retreat; but at all events I am provided with two strong horses and a hundred louis in gold." Fate was hard on the kindly epicurean, who after his long toil had made his bed in the sun, on which he was preparing to lie down in genial content till the end came. But he feels he must not think of rest; and that heavy as he is, and irksome to him as it is to move, he must before long be a rover again. Still he is never peevish upon his fortunes; he puts the best face on things as long as they will bear it.

He was not so philosophical under the bereavements that he now suffered. His aunt, Mrs. Porten, had died in 1786. He deplored her as he was bound to do, and feelingly regrets and blames himself for not having written to her as often as he might have done since their last parting. Then came the irreparable loss of Deyverdun. Shortly, an old Lausanne friend, M. de Severy, to whom he was much attached, died after a long illness. Lastly, and suddenly, came the death of Lady Sheffield, the wife of his friend Holroyd, with whom he had long lived on such intimate terms that he was in the habit of calling her his sister. The Sheffields, father and mother and two daughters, had spent the summer of 1791 with him at Lausanne. The visit was evidently an occasion of real

happiness and *épanchement de cœur* to the two old friends, and supplied Gibbon for nearly two years with tender regrets and recollections. Then, without any warning, he heard of Lady Sheffield's death. In a moment his mind was made up: he would go at once to console his friend. All the fatigue and irksomeness of the journey to one so ailing and feeble, all the dangers of the road lined and perhaps barred by hostile armies, vanished on the spot. Within twelve days he had made his preparations and started on his journey. He was forced to travel through Germany, and in his ignorance of the language he required an interpreter; young de Severy, the son of his deceased friend, joyfully, and out of mere affection for him, undertook the office of courier. "His attachment to me," wrote Gibbon, "is the sole motive which prompts him to undertake this troublesome journey." It is clear that he had the art of making himself loved. He travelled through Frankfort, Cologne, Brussels, Ostend, and was by his friend's side in little more than a month after he had received the fatal tidings. Well might Lord Sheffield say, "I must ever regard it as the most enduring proof of his sensibility, and of his possessing the true spirit of friendship, that, after having relinquished the thought of his intended visit, he hastened to England, in spite of increasing impediments, to soothe me by the most generous sympathy, and to alleviate my domestic affliction; neither his great corpulency nor his extraordinary bodily infirmities, nor any other consideration, could prevent him a moment from resolving on an undertaking that might have deterred the most active young man. He almost immediately, with an alertness by no means natural to him, undertook a great circuitous journey along the frontier of an enemy worse than savage, within the sound of their cannon, within the range of the light troops of the different armies, and through roads ruined by the enormous machinery of war."

In this public and private gloom he bade for ever farewell to Lausanne. He was himself rapidly approaching

> "The dark portal,
> Goal of all mortal,"

but of this he knew not as yet. While he is in the house of mourning, beside his bereaved friend, we will return for a short space to consider the conclusion of his great work.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST THREE VOLUMES OF THE DECLINE AND FALL.

THE thousand years between the fifth and the fifteenth century comprise the middle age, a period which only recently, through utterly inadequate conceptions of social growth, was wont to be called the dark ages. That long epoch of travail and growth, during which the old field of civilisation was broken up and sown afresh with new and various seed unknown to antiquity, receives now on all hands due recognition, as being one of the most rich, fertile, and interesting in the history of man. The all-embracing despotism of Rome was replaced by the endless local divisions and subdivisions of feudal tenure. The multiform rites and beliefs of polytheism were replaced by the single faith and paramount authority of the Catholic Church. The philosophies of Greece were dethroned, and the scholastic theology reigned in their stead. The classic tongues crumbled away, and out of their *débris* arose the modern idioms of France, Italy, and Spain, to which were added in Northern Europe the new forms of Teutonic speech. The fine and useful arts took a new departure; slavery was mitigated into serfdom; industry and commerce became powers in the world as they had never been before; the narrow municipal polity of the old world was in time succeeded by the broader national institutions based on various forms of representation. Gunpowder, America, and the art of printing were discovered, and the most civilised portion of mankind passed insensibly into the modern era.

Such was the wide expanse which spread out before Gibbon when he resolved to continue his work from the fall of the Western Empire to the capture of Constantinople. Indeed his glance took in a still wider field, as he was concerned as much with the decay of Eastern as of Western Rome, and the long-retarded fall of the former demanded large attention to the Oriental populations who assaulted the city and remaining empire of Constantine. So bold an historic enterprise was never conceived as when, standing on the limit of antiquity in the fifth century, he determined to pursue in rapid but not hasty survey the great lines of events for a thousand years, to follow in detail the really great transactions while discarding the less important, thereby giving prominence and clearness to what is memorable, and reproducing on a small scale the flow of time through the ages. It is to this portion of Gibbon's

work that the happy comparison has been made, that it resembles a magnificent Roman aqueduct spanning over the chasm which separates the ancient from the modern world. In these latter volumes he frees himself from the trammels of regular annalistic narrative, deals with events in broad masses according to their importance, expanding or contracting his story as occasion requires; now painting in large panoramic view the events of a few years, now compressing centuries into brief outline. Many of his massive chapters afford materials for volumes, and are well worthy of a fuller treatment than he could give without deranging his plan. But works of greater detail and narrower compass can never compete with Gibbon's history, any more than a county map can compete with a map of England or of Europe.

The variety of the contents of these last three volumes is amazing, especially when the thoroughness and perfection of the workmanship are considered. Prolix compilations or sketchy outlines of universal history have their use and place, but they are removed by many degrees from the *Decline and Fall*, or rather they belong to another species of authorship. It is not only that Gibbon combines width and depth, that the extent of his learning is as wonderful as its accuracy, though in this respect he has hardly a full rival in literature. The quality which places him not only in the first rank of historians, but in a class by himself, and makes him greater than the greatest, lies in his supreme power of moulding into lucid and coherent unity, the manifold and rebellious mass of his multitudinous materials, of coercing his divergent topics into such order that they seem spontaneously to grow like branches out of one stem, clear and visible to the mind. There is something truly epic in these latter volumes. Tribes, nations, and empires are the characters; one after another they come forth like Homeric heroes, and do their mighty deeds before the assembled armies. The grand and lofty chapters on Justinian; on the Arabs; on the Crusades, have a rounded completeness, coupled with such artistic subordination to the main action, that they read more like cantos of a great prose poem than the ordinary staple of historical composition. It may well be questioned whether there is another instance of such high literary form and finish, coupled with such vast erudition. And two considerations have to be borne in mind, which heighten Gibbon's merit in this respect. (1.) Almost the whole of his subject had been as yet untouched by any preceding writer of eminence, and he had no stimulus or example from his precursors. He united thus in himself the two characters of pioneer and artist. (2.) The barbarous and imperfect nature of the materials with which he chiefly had to work, —dull inferior writers, whose debased style was their least defect. A historian who has for his authorities masters of reason and language such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus is borne up by their genius; apt quotation and translation alone suffice to produce considerable effects; or in the case of subjects taken from modern times, weighty state papers, eloquent debates,

or finished memoirs supply ample materials for graphic narrative. But Gibbon had little but dross to deal with. Yet he has smelted and cast it into the grand shapes we see.

The fourth volume is nearly confined to the reign, or rather epoch, of Justinian,—a magnificent subject, which he has painted in his loftiest style of gorgeous narrative. The campaigns of Belisarius and Narses are related with a clearness and vigour that make us feel that Gibbon's merits as a military historian have not been quite sufficiently recognised. He had from the time of his service in the militia taken continued interest in tactics and all that was connected with the military art. It was no idle boast when he said that the captain of the Hampshire grenadiers had not been useless to the historian of the Roman empire. Military matters perhaps occupy a somewhat excessive space in his pages. Still, if the operations of war are to be related, it is highly important that they should be treated with intelligence, and knowledge how masses of men are moved, and by a writer to whom the various incidents of the camp, the march, and the bivouac, are not matters of mere hearsay, but of personal experience. The campaign of Belisarius in Africa may be quoted as an example.

"In the seventh year of the reign of Justinian, and about the time of the summer solstice, the whole fleet of six hundred ships was ranged in martial pomp before the gardens of the palace. The patriarch pronounced his benediction, the emperor signified his last commands, the general's trumpet gave the signal of departure, and every heart, according to its fears or wishes, explored with anxious curiosity the omens of misfortune or success. The first halt was made at Perintheus, or Heraclea, where Belisarius waited five days to receive some Thracian horses, a military gift of his sovereign. From thence the fleet pursued their course through the midst of the Propontis; but as they struggled to pass the straits of the Hellespont, an unfavourable wind detained them four days at Abydos, where the general exhibited a remarkable lesson of firmness and severity. Two of the Huns who, in a drunken quarrel, had slain one of their fellow-soldiers, were instantly shown to the army suspended on a lofty gibbet. The national dignity was resented by their countrymen, who disclaimed the servile laws of the empire and asserted the free privileges of Scythia, where a small fine was allowed to expiate the sallies of intemperance and anger. Their complaints were specious, their clamours were loud, and the Romans were not averse to the example of disorder and impunity. But the rising sedition was appeased by the authority and eloquence of the general, and he represented to the assembled troops the obligation of justice, the importance of discipline, the rewards of piety and virtue, and the unpardonable guilt of murder, which, in his apprehension, was aggravated rather than excused by the vice of intoxication. In the navigation from the Hellespont, to the Peloponnesus, which the Greeks after the siege of Troy had performed in four days, the fleet of Belisarius was guided in their course by his master-galley, conspicuous in the day by the redness of the sails, and in the night by torches blazing from the mast-head. It was the duty of the pilots as they steered between the islands and turned the capes of Malea and Tænarium to preserve the just order and regular intervals of such a multitude. As the wind was fair and moderate, their labours were not unsuccessful, and the troops were safely

disembarked at Methone, on the Messenian coast, to repose themselves for a while after the fatigues of the sea. . . . From the port of Methone the pilots steered along the western coast of Peloponnesus, as far as the island of Zacynthus, or Zante, before they undertook the voyage (in their eyes a most arduous voyage) of one hundred leagues over the Ionian sea. As the fleet was surprised by a calm, sixteen days were consumed in the slow navigation. . . At length the harbour of Caucana, on the southern side of Sicily, afforded a secure and hospitable shelter. . . Belisarius determined to hasten his operations, and his wise impatience was seconded by the winds. The fleet lost sight of Sicily, passed before the island of Malta, discovered the capes of Africa, ran along the coast with a strong gale from the north-east, and finally cast anchor at the promontory of Caput Vada, about five days journey to the south of Carthage. . . . . .

"Three months after their departure from Constantinople, the men and the horses, the arms and the military stores were safely disembarked, and five soldiers were left as a guard on each of the ships, which were disposed in the form of a semicircle. The remainder of the troops occupied a camp on the seashore, which they fortified, according to ancient discipline, with a ditch and rampart, and the discovery of a source of fresh water, while it allayed the thirst, excited the superstitious confidence of the Romans. . . The small town of Sullecte, one day's journey from the camp, had the honour of being foremost to open her gates and resume her ancient allegiance; the larger cities of Leptis and Adrumetum imitated the example of loyalty as soon as Belisarius appeared, and he advanced without opposition as far as Grasse, a palace of the Vandal kings, at the distance of fifty miles from Carthage. The weary Romans indulged themselves in the refreshment of shady groves, cool fountains, and delicious fruits. . . In three generations prosperity and a warm climate had dissolved the hardy virtue of the Vandals, who insensibly became the most luxurious of mankind. In their villas and gardens, which might deserve the Persian name of Paradise, they enjoyed a cool and elegant repose, and after the daily use of the bath, the barbarians were seated at a table profusely spread with the delicacies of the land and sea. Their silken robes, loosely flowing after the fashion of the Medes, were embroidered with gold, love and hunting were the labours of their life, and their vacant hours were amused by pantomimes, chariot-races, and the music and dances of the theatre.

"In a march of twelve days the vigilance of Belisarius was constantly awake and active against his unseen enemies, by whom in every place and at every hour he might be suddenly attacked. An officer of confidence and merit, John the Armenian, led the vanguard of three hundred horse. Six hundred Massagetæ covered at a certain distance the left flank, and the whole fleet, steering along the coast, seldom lost sight of the army, which moved each day about twelve miles, and lodged in the evening in strong camps or in friendly towns. The near approach of the Romans to Carthage filled the mind of Gelimer with anxiety and terror. . . . . .

"Yet the authority and promises of Gelimer collected a formidable army, and his plans were concerted with some degree of military skill. An order was despatched to his brother Ammatas to collect all the forces of Carthage, and to encounter the van of the Roman army at the distance of ten miles from the city: his nephew Gibamund with two thousand horse was destined to attack their left, when the monarch himself, who silently followed, should charge their rear in a situation which excluded them from the aid and even the view of their fleet. But the rashness of Ammatas was fatal to himself and his country. He anticipated the hour of attack,

outstripped his tardy followers, and was pierced with a mortal wound, after he had slain with his own hand twelve of his boldest antagonists. His Vandals fled to Carthage: the highway, almost ten miles, was strewn with dead bodies, and it seemed incredible that such multitudes could be slaughtered by the swords of three hundred Romans. The nephew of Gelimer was defeated after a slight combat by the six hundred Massagetæ; they did not equal the third part of his numbers, but each Scythian was fired by the example of his chief, who gloriously exercised the privilege of his family by riding foremost and alone to shoot the first arrow against the enemy. In the meantime Gelimer himself, ignorant of the event, and misguided by the windings of the hills, inadvertently passed the Roman army and reached the scene of action where Ammatas had fallen. He wept the fate of his brother and of Carthage, charged with irresistible fury the advancing squadrons, and might have pursued and perhaps decided the victory, if he had not wasted those inestimable moments in the discharge of a vain though pious duty to the dead. While his spirit was broken by this mournful office, he heard the trumpet of Belisarius, who, leaving Antonina and his infantry in the camp, pressed forward with his guards and the remainder of the cavalry to rally his flying troops, and to restore the fortune of the day. Much room could not be found in this disorderly battle for the talents of a general; but the king fled before the hero, and the Vandals, accustomed only to a Moorish enemy, were incapable of withstanding the arms and the discipline of the Romans. . . . . .

"As soon as the tumult had subsided, the several parts of the army informed each other of the accidents of the day, and Belisarius pitched his camp on the field of victory, to which the tenth milestone from Carthage had applied the Latin appellation of *Decimus*. From a wise suspicion of the stratagems and resources of the Vandals, he marched the next day in the order of battle; halted in the evening before the gates of Carthage, and allowed a night of repose, that he might not, in darkness and disorder, expose the city to the licence of the soldiers, or the soldiers themselves to the secret ambush of the city. But as the fears of Belisarius were the result of calm and intrepid reason, he was soon satisfied that he might confide without danger in the peaceful and friendly aspect of the capital. Carthage blazed with innumerable torches, the signal of the public joy; the chain was removed that guarded the entrance of the port, the gates were thrown open, and the people with acclamations of gratitude hailed and invited their Roman deliverers. The defeat of the Vandals and the freedom of Africa were announced to the city on the eve of St. Cyprian, when the churches were already adorned and illuminated for the festival of the martyr whom three centuries of superstition had almost raised to a local deity. . . One awful hour reversed the fortunes of the contending parties. The suppliant Vandals, who had so lately indulged the vices of conquerors, sought an humble refuge in the sanctuary of the church; while the merchants of the east were delivered from the deepest dungeon of the palace by their affrighted keeper, who implored the protection of his captives, and showed them through an aperture in the wall the sails of the Roman fleet. After their separation from the army, the naval commanders had proceeded with slow caution along the coast, till they reached the Hermæan promontory, and obtained the first intelligence of the victory of Belisarius. Faithful to his instructions they would have cast anchor about twenty miles from Carthage, if the more skilful had not represented the perils of the shore and the signs of an impending tempest. Still ignorant of the revolution, they declined however the rash attempt of forcing the chain of the port, and the adjacent har-

bour and suburb of Mandracium were insulted only by the rapine of a private officer, who disobeyed and deserted his leaders. But the imperial fleet, advancing with a fair wind, steered through the narrow entrance of the Goletta and occupied the deep and capacious lake of Tunis, a secure station about five miles from the capital. No sooner was Belisarius informed of the arrival than he despatched orders that the greatest part of the mariners should be immediately landed to join the triumph and to swell the apparent numbers of the Romans. Before he allowed them to enter the gates of Carthage he exhorted them, in a discourse worthy of himself and the occasion, not to disgrace the glory of their arms, and to remember that the Vandals had been the tyrants, but that *they* were the deliverers of the Africans, who must now be respected as the voluntary and affectionate subjects of their common sovereign. The Romans marched through the streets in close ranks, prepared for battle if an enemy had appeared; the strict order maintained by their general imprinted on their minds the duty of obedience: and in an age in which custom and impunity almost sanctified the abuse of conquest, the genius of one man repressed the passions of a victorious army. The voice of menace and complaint was silent, the trade of Carthage was not interrupted, while Africa changed her master and her government, the shops continued open and busy; and the soldiers, after sufficient guards had been posted, modestly departed to the houses which had been allotted for their reception. Belisarius fixed his residence in the palace, seated himself on the throne of Genseric, accepted and distributed the barbaric spoil, granted their lives to the suppliant Vandals, and laboured to restore the damage which the suburb of Mandracium had sustained in the preceding night. At supper he entertained his principal officers with the form and magnificence of a royal banquet. The victor was respectfully served by the captive officers of the household, and in the moments of festivity, when the impartial spectators applauded the fortune and merit of Belisarius, his envious flatterers secretly shed their venom on every word and gesture which might alarm the suspicions of a jealous monarch. One day was given to these pompous scenes, which may not be despised as useless if they attracted the popular veneration; but the active mind of Belisarius, which in the pride of victory could suppose defeat, had already resolved that the Roman empire in Africa should not depend on the chance of arms or the favour of the people. The fortifications of Carthage had alone been excepted from the general proscription; but in the reign of ninety-five years they were suffered to decay by the thoughtless and indolent Vandals. A wiser conqueror restored with incredible despatch the walls and ditches of the city. His liberality encouraged the workmen; the soldiers, the mariners, and the citizens vied with each other in the salutary labour; and Gelimer, who had feared to trust his person in an open town, beheld with astonishment and despair the rising strength of an impregnable fortress."

But we have hardly finished admiring the brilliant picture of the conquest of Africa and Italy, before Gibbon gives us further proof of his many-sided culture and catholicity of mind. His famous chapter on the Roman law has been accepted by the most fastidious experts of an esoteric science as a masterpiece of knowledge, condensation, and lucidity. It has actually been received as a textbook in some of the continental universities, published separately with notes and illustrations. When we consider the neg-

lect of Roman jurisprudence in England till quite recent times, and its severe study on the Continent, we shall better appreciate the mental grasp and vigour which enabled an unprofessional Englishman in the last century to produce such a dissertation. A little further on (chapter forty-seven) the history of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the controversies that sprang up around it, are discussed with a subtlety worthy of a scientific theologian. It is perhaps the first attempt towards a philosophical history of dogma, less patient and minute than the works of the specialists of modern Germany on the same subject, but for spirit, clearness, and breadth it is superior to those profound but somewhat barbarous writers. The flexibility of intellect which can do justice in quick succession to such diverse subjects is very extraordinary, and assuredly implies great width of sympathy and large receptivity of nature.

Having terminated the period of Justinian, Gibbon makes a halt, and surveys the varied and immense scene through which he will presently pass in many directions. He rapidly discovers *ten* main lines, along which he will advance in succession to his final goal, the conquest of Constantinople. The two pages at the commencement of the forty-eight, chapter, in which he sketches out the remainder of his plan and indicates the topics which he means to treat, are admirable as a luminous *précis*, and for the powerful grasp which they show of his immense subject. It lay spread out all before him, visible in every part to his penetrating eye, and he seems to rejoice in his conscious strength and ability to undertake the historical conquest on which he is about to set out. "Nor will this scope of narrative," he says, "the riches and variety of these materials, be incompatible with the unity of design and composition. As in his daily prayers the Mussulman of Fez or Delhi still turns his face towards the temple of Mecca, the historian's eye will always be fixed on the city of Constantinople." Then follows the catalogue of nations and empires whose fortunes he means to sing. A grander vision, a more majestic procession, never swept before the mind's eye of poet or historian.

And the practical execution is worthy of the initial inspiration. After a rapid and condensed narrative of Byzantine history till the end of the twelfth century, he takes up the brilliant theme of Mahomet and his successors. A few pages on the climate and physical features of Arabia fittingly introduce the subject. And it may be noted in passing that Gibbon's attention to geography, and his skill and taste for geographical description, are remarkable among his many gifts. He was as diligent a student of maps and travels as of historical records, and seems to have had a rare faculty of realising in imagination scenes and countries of which he had only read. In three chapters, glowing with oriental colour and rapid as a charge of Arab horse, he tells the story of the prophet and the Saracen empire. Then the Bulgarians, Hungarians, and Russians appear on the scene, to be soon followed by the Normans, and their short but brilliant dominion in Southern Italy.

But now the Seljukian Turks are emerging from the depths of Asia, taking the place of the degenerated Saracens, invading the Eastern empire and conquering Jerusalem. The two waves of hostile fanaticism soon meet in the Crusades. The piratical seizure of Constantinople by the Latins brings in view the French and Venetians, the family of Courtenay and its pleasant digression. Then comes the slow agony of the restored Greek empire. Threatened by the Moguls, it is invaded and dismembered by the Ottoman Turks. Constantinople seems ready to fall into their hands. But the timely diversion of Tamerlane produces a respite of half a century. Nothing can be more artistic than Gibbon's management of his subject as he approaches its termination. He, who is such a master of swift narrative, at this point introduces artful pauses, *suspensions* of the final catastrophe, which heighten our interest in the fate which is hanging over the city of Constantine. In 1425 the victorious Turks have conquered all the Greek empire save the capital. Amurath II. besieged it for two months, and was only prevented from taking it by a domestic revolt in Asia Minor. At the end of his sixty-fifth chapter Gibbon leaves Constantinople hanging on the brink of destruction, and paints in glowing colours the military virtues of its deadly enemies, the Ottomans. Then he interposes one of his most finished chapters, of miscellaneous contents, but terminating in the grand and impressive pages on the revival of learning in Italy. There we read of the "curiosity and emulation of the Latins," of the zeal of Petrarch and the success of Boccace in Greek studies, of Leontius, Pilatus, Bessarion, and Lascaris. A glow of sober enthusiasm warms the great scholar as he paints the early light of that happy dawn. He admits that the "arms of the Turks pressed the flight of the Muses" from Greece to Italy. But he "trembles at the thought that Greece might have been overwhelmed with her schools and libraries, before Europe had emerged from the deluge of barbarism, and that the seeds of science might have been scattered on the winds, before the Italian soil was prepared for their cultivation." In one of the most perfect sentences to be found in English prose he thus describes the Greek tongue: "In their lowest depths of servitude and depression, the subjects of the Byzantine throne were still possessed of a golden key that could unlock the treasures of antiquity, of a musical and prolific language that gives a soul to the objects of sense and a body to the abstractions of philosophy." Meanwhile we are made to feel that the subjects of the Byzantine throne, with their musical speech, that Constantinople with her libraries and schools, will all soon fall a prey to the ravening and barbarous Turk. This brightening light of the Western sky contending with the baleful gloom which is settling down over the East, is one of the most happy contrasts in historical literature. Then comes the end, the preparations and skill of the savage invader, the futile but heroic defence, the overwhelming ruin which struck down the Cross and erected the Crescent over the city of Constantine the Great.

It is one of the many proofs of Gibbon's artistic instinct that

he did not end with this great catastrophe. On the contrary, he adds three more chapters. His fine tact warned him that the tumult and thunder of the final ruin must not be the last sounds to strike the ear. A resolution of the discord was needed; a soft chorale should follow the din and lead to a mellow *adagio* close. And this he does with supreme skill. With ill-suppressed disgust, he turns from New to Old Rome. "Constantinople no longer appertains to the Roman historian—nor shall I enumerate the civil and religious edifices that were profaned or erected by its Turkish masters." Amid the decayed temples and mutilated beauty of the Eternal City, he moves down to a melodious and pathetic conclusion —piously visits the remaining fragments of ancient splendour and art, deplores and describes the ravages wrought by time, and still more by man, and recurring once again to the scene of his first inspiration, bids farewell to the Roman empire among the ruins of the Capitol.

We have hitherto spoken in terms of warm, though perhaps not excessive eulogy of this great work. But praise would lack the force of moderation and equipoise, if allusion were not made to some of its defects. The pervading defect of all has been already referred to in a preceding chapter—an inadequate conception of society as an organism, living and growing, like other organisms, according to special laws of its own. In these brilliant volumes on the Middle Ages, the special problems which that period suggests are not stated, far less solved; they are not even suspected. The feudal polity, the Catholic Church, the theocratic supremacy of the Popes, considered as institutions which the historian is called upon to estimate and judge; the gradual dissolution of both feudalis mand Catholicism, brought about by the spread of industry in the temporal order and of science in the spiritual order, are not even referred to. Many more topics might be added to this list of weighty omissions. It would be needless to say that no blame attaches to Gibbon for neglecting views of history which had not emerged in his time, if there were not persons, who, forgetting the slow progress of knowledge, are apt to ascribe the defects of a book to incompetence in its author. If Gibbon's conception of the Middle Ages seems to us inadequate now, it is because since his time our conceptions of society in that and in all periods have been much enlarged. We may be quite certain that if Gibbon had had our experience, no one would have seen the imperfections of particular sides of his work as we now have it more clearly than he.

Laying aside, therefore, reflexions of this kind as irrelevant and unjust, we may ask whether there are any other faults which may fairly be found with him. One must admit that there are. After all, they are not very important.

(1.) Striking as is his account of Justinian's reign, it has two blemishes. First, the offensive details about the vices of Theodora. Granting them to be well authenticated, which they are not, it was quite unworthy of the author and his subject to soil his pages with such a *chronique scandaleuse*. The defence which he sets up in his

Memoirs, that he is "justified in painting the manners of the times, and that the vices of Theodora form an essential feature in the reign and character of Justinian," cannot be admitted. First, we are not sure that the vices existed, and were not the impure inventions of a malignant calumniator. Secondly, Gibbon is far from painting the manners of the time as a moralist or an historian; he paints them with a zest for pruriency worthy of Bayle or Brantome. It was an occasion for a wise scepticism to register grave doubts as to the infamous stories of Procopius. A rehabilitation of Theodora is not a theme calculated to provoke enthusiasm, and is impossible besides from the entire want of adequate evidence. But a thoughtful writer would not have lost his time, if he referred to the subject at all, in pointing out the moral improbability of the current accounts. He might have dwelt on the *unsupported* testimony of the only witness, the unscrupulous Procopius, whom Gibbon himself convicts on another subject of flagrant mendacity. But he would have been especially slow to believe that a woman who had led the life of incredible profligacy he has described, would, in consequence of "some vision either of sleep or fancy," in which future exaltation was promised to her, assume "like a skilful actress, a more decent character, relieve her poverty by the laudable industry of spinning wool, and affect a life of chastity and solitude in a small house, which she afterwards changed into a magnificent temple." Magdalens have been converted, no doubt, from immoral living, but not by considerations of astute prudence suggested by day-dreams of imperial greatness. Gibbon might have thought of the case of Madame de Maintenon, and how her reputation fared in the hands of the vindictive courtiers of Versailles; how a woman, cold as ice and pure as snow, was freely charged with the most abhorrent vices without an atom of foundation. But the truth probably is that he never thought of the subject seriously at all, and that, yielding to a regrettable inclination, he copied his licentious Greek notes with little reluctance.

(2.) The character of Belisarius, enigmatical enough in itself, is made by him more enigmatical still. He concludes the forty-first chapter, in which the great deeds of the conqueror of Italy and Africa, and the ingratitude with which Justinian rewarded his services, are set forth in strong contrast, with the inept remark that "Belisarius appears to be either below or above the character of a MAN." The grounds of the apparent meekness with which Belisarius supported his repeated disgraces cannot now be ascertained: but the motives of Justinian's conduct are not so difficult to find. As Finlay points out in his thoughtful history of Greece, Belisarius must have been a peculator on a large and dangerous scale. "Though he refused the Gothic throne and the empire of the West, he did not despise nor neglect wealth: he accumulated riches which could not have been acquired by any commander-in-chief amidst the wars and famines of the period, without rendering the military and civil administration subservient to his pecuniary profit. On his return from Italy he lived at Con-

stantinople in almost regal splendour, and maintained a body of 7,000 cavalry attached to his household. In an empire where confiscation was an ordinary financial resource, and under a sovereign whose situation rendered jealousy only common prudence, it is not surprising that the wealth of Belisarius excited the imperial cupidity, and induced Justinian to seize great part of it" (*Greece under the Romans*, chap. 3). There is shrewd insight in this, and though we may regret that we cannot attain to more, it is better than leaving the subject with an unmeaning paradox.

It may be said generally that Gibbon has not done justice to the services rendered to Europe by the Byzantine empire. In his crowded forty-eighth chapter, which is devoted to the subject, he passes over events and characters with such speed that his history in this part becomes little more than a chronicle, vivid indeed, but barren of thoughtful political views. His account of the Isaurian period may be instanced among others as an example of defective treatment. If we turn to the judicious Finlay, we see what an immense but generally unacknowledged debt Europe owes to the Greek empire. The saving of Christendom from Mohammedan conquest is too easily attributed to the genius of Charles Martel and his brave Franks. The victory at Tours was important no doubt, but almost a century previously the followers of the prophet had been checked by Heraclius; and their memorable repulse before Constantinople under the Isaurian Leo was the real barrier opposed to their conquest of the West. It requires but little reflection to see that without this brave resistance to the Moslem invasion, the course of mediæval history would have been completely changed. Next in time, but hardly second in value to the services of the Greeks at Marathon and Salamis, must be reckoned the services of the Byzantine emperors in repelling the barbarians. Such an important consideration as this should hardly have escaped Gibbon.

Gibbon's account of Charlemagne is strangely inadequate. It is perhaps the only instance in his work where he has failed to appreciate a truly great man, and the failure is the more deplorable as it concerns one of the greatest men who have ever lived. He did not realise the greatness of the man, of his age, or of his work. Properly considered, the eighth century is the most important and memorable which Europe has ever seen. During its course the geographical limits, the ecclesiastical polity, and the feudal system within and under which our western group of nations was destined to live for five or six centuries, were provisionally settled and determined. The wonderful house of the Carolings, which produced no less than five successive rulers of genius (of whom two had extraordinary genius, Charles Martel and Charlemagne, were the human instruments of this great work. The Frankish Monarchy was hastening to ruin when they saved it. Saxons in the East and Saracens in the South were on the point of extinguishing the few surviving embers of civilisation which still existed. The Bishop of Rome was ready to fall a prey to the Lombards, and the pro-

gressive papacy of Hildebrand and Innocent ran imminent risk of being extirpated at its root. Charles and his ancestors prevented these evils. Of course it is open to any one to say that there were no evils threatening, that Mohammedanism is as good as Christianity, that the Papacy was a monstrous calamity, that to have allowed Eastern Germany to remain pagan and barbarous would have done no harm. The question cannot be discussed here. But every law of historic equity compels us to admit that whether the result was good or bad, the genius of men who could leave such lasting impressions on the world as the Carolings did, must have been exceptionally great. And this is what Gibbon has not seen; he has not seen that, whether their work was good or bad in the issue, it was colossal. His tone in reference to Charlemagne is unworthy to a degree. "Without injustice to his fame, I may discern some blemishes in the sanctity and greatness of the restorer of the Western Empire. Of his moral virtues, chastity was not the most conspicuous." This from the pen of Gibbon seems hardly serious. Again: "I touch with reverence the laws of Charlemagne, so highly applauded by a respectable judge. They compose not a system, but a series of occasional and minute edicts, for the correction of abuses, the reformation of manners, the economy of his farms, the care of his poultry, and even the sale of his eggs." And yet Gibbon had read the Capitularies. The struggle and care of the hero to master in some degree the wide welter of barbarism surging around him, he never recognised. It is a spot on Gibbon's fame.

Dean Milman considers that Gibbon's account of the Crusades is the least accurate and satisfactory chapter in his history, and "that he has here failed in that lucid arrangement which in general gives perspicuity to his most condensed and crowded narratives." This blame seems to be fully merited, if restricted to the second of the two chapters which Gibbon has devoted to the Crusades. The fifty-eighth chapter, in which he treats of the First Crusade, leaves nothing to be desired. It is not one of his best chapters, though it is quite up to his usually high level. But the fifty-ninth chapter, it must be owned, is not only weak, but what is unexampled elsewhere in him, confused and badly written. It is not, as in the case of Charlemagne, a question of imperfect appreciation of a great man or epoch; it is a matter of careless and slovenly presentation of a period which he had evidently mastered with his habitual thoroughness, but owing to the rapidity with which he composed his last volume, he did not do full justice to it. He says significantly in his Memoirs, that "he wished that a pause, an interval, had been allowed for a serious revisal" of the last three volumes, and there can be little doubt that this chapter was one of the sources of his regrets. It is in fact a mere tangle. The Second and the Third Crusades are so jumbled together, that it is only a reader who knows the subject very well who can find his way through the labyrinth. Gibbon seems at this point, a thing very unusual with him, to have become impatient with his subject,

and to have wished to hurry over it. "A brief parallel," he says, "may save the repetition of a tedious narrative." The result of this expeditious method has been far from happy. It is the only occasion where Gibbon has failed in his usual high finish and admirable literary form.

Gibbon's style was at one period somewhat of a party question. Good Christians felt a scruple in discerning any merits in the style of a writer who had treated the martyrs of the early Church with so little ceremony and generosity. On the other hand, those whose opinions approached more or less to his, expatiated on the splendour and majesty of his diction. Archbishop Whately went out of his way in a note to his *Logic* to make a keen thrust at an author whom it was well to depreciate whenever occasion served. "His way of writing," he says, "reminds one of those persons who never dare look you full in the face." Such criticisms are out of date now. The faults of Gibbon's style are obvious enough, and its compensatory merits are not far to seek. No one can overlook its frequent tumidity and constant want of terseness. It lacks suppleness, ease, variety. It is not often distinguished by happy selection of epithet, and seems to ignore all delicacy of *nuance*. A prevailing grandiloquence, which easily slides into pomposity, is its greatest blemish. The acute Porson saw this and expressed it admirably. In the preface to his letters to Archdeacon Travis, he says of Gibbon, "Though his style is in general correct and elegant, he sometimes 'draws out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.' In endeavoring to avoid vulgar terms he too frequently dignifies trifles, and clothes common thoughts in a splendid dress that would be rich enough for the noblest ideas. In short we are too often reminded of that great man, Mr. Prig, the auctioneer, whose manner was so inimitably fine that he had as much to say on a ribbon as on a Raphael." It seems as if Gibbon had taken the stilted tone of the old French tragedy for his model, rather than the crisp and nervous prose of the best French writers. We are constantly offended by a superfine diction lavished on barbarous chiefs and rough soldiers of the Lower Empire, which almost reproduces the high flown rhetoric in which Corneille's and Racine's characters address each other. Such phrases as the "majesty of the throne," "the dignity of the purple," the "wisdom of the senate," recur with a rather jarring monotony, especially when the rest of the narrative is designed to show that there was no majesty nor dignity nor wisdom involved in the matter. We feel that the writer was thinking more of his sonorous sentence than of the real fact. On the other hand, nothing but a want of candour or taste can lead any one to overlook the rare and great excellences of Gibbon's style. First of all, it is singularly correct: a rather common merit now, but not common in his day. But its sustained vigour and loftiness will always be uncommon; above all its rapidity and masculine length of stride are quite admirable. When he takes up his pen to describe a campaign, or any great historic scene, we feel that we

shall have something worthy of the occasion, that we shall be carried swiftly and grandly through it all, without the suspicion of a breakdown of any kind being possible. An indefinable stamp of weightiness is impressed on Gibbon's writing; he has a baritone manliness which banishes everthing small, trivial, or weak. When he is eloquent (and it should be remembered to his credit that he never affects eloquence, though he occasionally affects dignity), he rises without effort into real grandeur. On the whole we may say that his manner, with certain manifest faults, is not unworthy of his matter, and the praise is great.

It is not quite easy to give expression to another feeling which is often excited in reading Gibbon. It is somewhat of this kind, that it is more fitted to inspire admiration than love or sympathy. Its merits are so great, the mass of information it contains is so stupendous, that all competent judges of such work feel bound to praise it. Whether they like it in the same degree, may be questioned. Among reading men and educated persons it is not common—such is my experience—to meet with people who know their Gibbon well. Superior women do not seem to take to him kindly, even when there is no impediment on religious grounds. Madame du Deffand, writing to Walpole, says, "I whisper it to you, but I am not pleased with Mr. Gibbon's work. It is declamatory, oratorical . . . I lay it aside without regret, and it requires an effort to take it up again." Another of Walpole's correspondents, the Countess of Ossory, seems to have made similar strictures. If we admit that women are less capable than masculine scholars of doing justice to the strong side of Gibbon, we may also acknowledge that they are better fitted than men to appreciate and to be shocked by his defective side, which is a prevailing want of moral elevation and nobility of sentiment. His cheek rarely flushes in enthusiasm for a good cause. The tragedy of human life never seems to touch him, no glimpse of the infinite ever calms and raises the reader of his pages. Like nearly all the men of his day, he was of the earth earthy, and it is impossible to get over the fact.

CHAPTER X.

LAST ILLNESS.—DEATH.—CONCLUSION.

GIBBON had now only about six months to live. He did not seem to have suffered by his rapid journey from Lausanne to London. During the summer which he spent with his friend Lord Sheffield, he was much as usual; only his friend noticed that his habitual dislike to motion appeared to increase, and he was so incapable of exercise that he was confined to the library and dining-room. "Then he joined Mr. F. North in pleasant arguments against exercise in general. He ridiculed the unsettled and restless disposition that summer, the most uncomfortable of all seasons, as he said, generally gives to those who have the use of their limbs." The true disciples of Epicurus are not always the least stout and stoical in the presence of irreparable evils.

After spending three or four months at Sheffield Place, he went to Bath to visit his stepmother, Mrs. Gibbon. His conduct to her through life was highly honourable to him. It should be remembered that her jointure, paid out of his father's decayed estate, was a great tax on his small income. In his efforts to improve his position by selling his landed property, Mrs. Gibbon seems to have been at times somewhat difficult to satisfy as regards the security of her interests. It was only prudent on her part. But it is easy to see what a source of alienation and quarrel was here ready prepared, if both parties had not risen superior to sordid motives. There never seems to have been the smallest cloud between them. When one of his properties was sold he writes: "Mrs. Gibbon's jointure is secured on the Buriton estate, and her legal consent is requisite for the sale. Again and again I must repeat my hope that she is perfectly satisfied, and that the close of her life may not be embittered by suspicion, fear, or discontent. What new security does she prefer—the funds, a mortgage, or your land? At all events, she must be made easy." So Gibbon left town and lay at Reading on his road to Bath: here he passed about ten days with his stepmother, who was now nearly eighty years of age. "In mind and conversation she is just the same as twenty years ago," he writes to Lord Sheffield; "she has spirits, appetite, legs, and eyes, and talks of living till ninety. I can say from my heart, Amen." And in another letter, a few days later, he

says: "A *tête-à-tête* of eight or nine hours every day is rather difficult to support; yet I do assure you that our conversation flows with more ease and spirit when we are alone, than when any auxiliaries are summoned to our aid. She is indeed a wonderful woman, and I think all her faculties of the mind stronger and more active than I have ever known them. . . . . I shall therefore depart next Friday, but I may possibly reckon without my host, as I have not yet apprised Mrs. G. of the term of my visit, and will certainly not quarrel with her for a short delay." He then went to Althorpe, and it is the last evidence of his touching a book—"exhausted the morning (of the 5th November) among the first editions of Cicero." Then he came to London, and in a few days was seized with the illness which in a little more than two months put an end to his life.

His malady was dropsy, complicated with other disorders. He had most strangely neglected a very dangerous symptom for upwards of thirty years, not only having failed to take medical advice about it, but even avoiding all allusion to it to bosom friends like Lord Sheffield. But longer concealment was now impossible. He sent for the eminent surgeon Farquhar (the same who afterwards attended William Pitt), and he, together with Cline, at once recognised the case as one of the utmost gravity, though they did not say as much to the patient. On Thursday, the 14th of November, he was tapped and greatly relieved. He said he was not appalled by the operation, and during its progress he did not lay aside his usual good-humoured pleasantry. He was soon out again, but only for a few days, and a fortnight after another tapping was necessary. Again he went out to dinners and parties, which must have been most imprudent at his age and in his state. But he does not seem to have acted contrary to medical advice. He was very anxious to meet the prime minister, William Pitt, with whom he was not acquainted, though he must have seen him in old days in the House. He saw him twice; once at Eden Farm for a whole day, and was much gratified, we are told. At last he got to what he called his home—the house of his true and devoted friend, Lord Sheffield. "But," says the latter, whose narrative of his friend's last illness is marked by a deep and reserved tenderness that does him much honour, "this last visit to Sheffield Place became far different from any he had ever made before. That ready, cheerful, various and illuminating conversation which we had before admired in him, was not always to be found in the library or the drawing-room. He moved with difficulty, and retired from company sooner than he had been used to do. On the 23rd of December his appetite began to fail him. He observed to me that it was a very bad sign *with him* when he could not eat his breakfast, which he had done at all times very heartily; and this seems to have been the strongest expression of apprehension that he was ever observed to utter." He soon became too ill to remain beyond the reach of the highest medical advice. On the 7th of January, 1794, he left a houseful of company and friends for his lodgings in St. James's Street. On

arriving he sent the following note to Lord Sheffield, the last lines he ever wrote :—

"St. James's, Four o'Clock, Tuesday.

"This date says everything. I was almost killed between Sheffield Place and East Grinstead by hard, frozen, long, and cross ruts, that would disgrace the approach of an Indian wigwam. The rest was somewhat less painful, and I reached this place half dead, but not seriously feverish or ill. I found a dinner invitation from Lord Lucan; but what are dinners to me? I wish they did not know of my departure. I catch the flying post. What an effort! Adieu till Thursday or Friday."

The end was not far off. On the 13th of January he underwent another operation, and, as usual, experienced much relief. "His spirits continued good. He talked of passing his time at houses which he had often frequented with great pleasure—the Duke of Devonshire's, Mr. Craufurd's, Lord Spencer's, Lord Lucan's, Sir Ralph Payne's, Mr. Batt's." On the 14th of January "he saw some company—Lady Lucan and Lady Spencer—and thought himself well enough to omit the opium draught which he had been used to take for some time. He slept very indifferently; before nine the next morning he rose, but could not eat his breakfast. However, he appeared tolerably well, yet complained at times of a pain in his stomach. At one o'clock he received a visit of an hour from Madame de Sylva; and at three, his friend, Mr. Craufurd, of Auchinames (whom he always mentioned with particular regard), called, and stayed with him till past five o'clock. They talked, as usual, on various subjects; and twenty hours before his death Mr. Gibbon happened to fall into a conversation not uncommon with him, on the probable duration of his life. He said that he thought himself a good life for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years. About six he ate the wing of a chicken and drank three glasses of Madeira. After dinner he became very uneasy and impatient, complained a good deal, and appeared so weak that his servant was alarmed.

"During the evening he complained much of his stomach, and of a feeling of nausea. Soon after nine, he took his opium draught and went to bed. About ten he complained of much pain, and desired that warm napkins might be applied to his stomach. He almost incessantly expressed a sense of pain till about four o'clock in the morning, when he said he found his stomach much easier. About seven the servant asked whether he should send for Mr. Farquhar. He answered, No; that he was as well as the day before. At about half-past eight he got out of bed, and said he was 'plus adroit' than he had been for three months past, and got into bed again without assistance, better than usual. About nine he said he would rise. The servant, however, persuaded him to remain in bed till Mr. Farquhar, who was expected at eleven,

should come. Till about that hour he spoke with great facility. Mr. Farquhar came at the time appointed, and he was then visibly dying. When the *valet-de-chambre* returned, after attending Mr. Farquhar out of the room, Mr. Gibbon said, 'Pourquoi est ce que vous me quittez?' This was about half-past eleven. At twelve he drank some brandy and water from a teapot, and desired his favourite servant to stay with him. These were the last words he pronounced articulately. To the last he preserved his senses; and when he could no longer speak, his servant having asked a question, he made a sign to show that he understood him. He was quite tranquil, and did not stir, his eyes half shut. About a quarter before one he ceased to breathe." He wanted just eighty-three days of fifty-seven years of age.

Thus, in consequence of his own strange self-neglect and imprudence, was extinguished one of the most richly-stored minds that ever lived. Occurring when it did, so near the last summons, Gibbon's prospective hope of continued life "for ten, twelve, or twenty years" is harshly pathetic, and full of that irony which mocks the vain cares of men. But, truly, his forecast was not irrational if he had not neglected ordinary precautions. In spite of his ailments he felt full, and was full, of life, when he was cut off. We cannot be sure if lengthened days would have added much to his work already achieved. There is hardly a parallel case in literature of the great powers of a whole life being so concentrated on one supreme and magnificent effort. Yet, if he had lived to 1804, or as an extreme limit, to 1814, we should have been all gainers. In the first place, he certainly would have finished his admirable autobiography. We cannot imagine what he would have made of it, judging from the fragment which exists. And yet that fragment is almost a masterpiece. But his fertile mind had other schemes in prospect; and what such a diligent worker would have done with a decade or two more of years it is impossible to say, except that it is certain they would not have been wasted. The extinction of a real mind is ever an irreparable loss.

As it was, he went to his rest after one of the greatest victories ever achieved in his own field of humane letters, and lived long enough to taste the fruits of his toil. He was never puffed up, but soberly and without arrogance received his laurels. His unselfish zeal and haste to console his bereaved friend showed him him warm and loving to the last; and we may say that his last serious effort was consecrated to the genius of pious friendship.

In 1796, two years after Gibbon's death, Lord Sheffield published two quarto volumes of the historian's miscellaneous works. They have been republished in one thick octavo, and many persons suppose that it contains the whole of the posthumous works: not unnaturally, as a fraudulent statement on the title-page, "complete in one volume," is well calculated to produce that impression. But in 1814 Lord Sheffield issued a second edition in five volumes octavo, containing much additional matter, which additional matter was again published in a quarto form, no doubt for the convenience of the purchasers of the original quarto edition.

Of the posthumous works, the Memoirs are by far the most important portion. Unfortunately, they were left in a most unfinished state, and what we now read is nothing else than a mosaic put together by Lord Sheffield from *six* different sketches. Next to the Memoirs are the journals and diaries of his studies. As a picture of Gibbon's method, zeal, and thoroughness in the pursuit of knowledge, they are of the highest interest. But they refer to an early period of his studies, long previous to the concentration of his mind on his great work, and one would like to know whether they present the best selection that might have been made from these records. It is interesting to follow Gibbon in his perusal of Homer and Juvenal at five-and-twenty. But one would much like to be admttted to his study when he was a far riper scholar, and preparing for or writing the *Decline and Fall.* Lord Sheffield positively prohibited by a clause in his will, any further publication of the Gibbon papers, and although Dean Milman was permitted to see them, it was with the express understanding that none of their contents should be divulged. After the Memoirs and the journals, the most interesting portion of the miscellaneous works are *The Antiquities of the House of Brunswick*, which in their present form are merely the preparatory sketch of a large work. It is too imperfect to allow us to judge of what Gibbon even designed to make of it. But it contains some masterly pages, and the style in many places seems more nervous and supple than that of the *Decline and Fall.*

For instance, this account of Albert Azo the Second :—

"Like one of his Tuscan ancestors Azo the Second was distinguished among the princes of Italy by the epithet of the *Rich.* The particulars of his rentroll cannot now be ascertained. An occasional though authentic deed of investiture enumerates eighty-three fiefs or manors which he held of the empire in Lombardy and Tuscany, from the Marquisate of Este to the county of Luni; but to these possessions must be added the lands which he enjoyed as the vassal of the Church, the ancient patrimony of Otbert (the terra Obertenga) in the counties of Arezzo, Pisa, and Lucca, and the marriage portion of his first wife, which, according to the various readings of the manuscripts, may be computed either at twenty or two hundred thousand English acres. If such a mass of landed property were now accumulated on the head of an Italian nobleman, the annual revenue might satisfy the largest demands of private luxury or avarice, and the fortunate owner would be rich in the improvement of agriculture, the manufactures of industry, the refinement of taste, and the extent of commerce. But the barbarism of the eleventh century diminished the income and aggravated the expense of the Marquis of Este. In a long series of war and anarchy, man and the works of man had been swept away, and the introduction of each ferocious and idle stranger had been overbalanced by the loss of five or six perhaps of the peaceful industrious natives. The mischievous growth of vegetation, the frequent inundations of the rivers were no longer checked by the vigilance of labor; the face of the country was again covered with forests and morasses; of the vast domains which acknowledged Azo for their lord, the far greater part was abandoned to the beasts of the field, and a much smaller portion was reduced to a state of constant and productive husbandry. An adequate rent may be obtained

from the skill and substance of a free tenant who fertilizes a grateful soil, and enjoys the security and benefit of a long lease. But faint is the hope and scanty is the produce of these harvests which are raised by the reluctant toil of peasants and slaves condemned to a bare subsistence and careless of the interests of a rapacious master. If his granaries are full, his purse is empty, and the want of cities or commerce, the difficulty of finding or reaching a market, obliges him to consume on the spot a part of his useless stock, which cannot be exchanged for merchandise or money. . . . The entertainment of his vassals and soldiers, their pay and rewards, their arms and horses, surpassed the measure of the most oppressive tribute, and the destruction which he inflicted on his neighbours was often retaliated on his own lands. The costly elegance of palaces and gardens was superseded by the laborious and expensive construction of strong castles on the summits of the most inaccessible rocks, and some of these, like the fortress of Canossa in the Apennine, were built and provided to sustain a three years' siege against a royal army. But his defence in this world was less burdensome to a wealthy lord than his salvation in the next; the demands of his chapel, his priests, his alms, his offerings, his pilgrimages were incessantly renewed; the monastery chosen for his sepulchre was endowed with his fairest possessions, and the naked heir might often complain that his father's sins had been redeemed at too high a price. The Marquis Azo was not exempt from the contagion of the times; his devotion was animated and inflamed by the frequent miracles that were performed in his presence; and the monks of Vangadizza, who yielded to his request the arm of a dead saint, were not ignorant of the value of that inestimable jewel. After satisfying the demands of war and superstition he might appropriate the rest of his revenue to use and pleasure. But the Italians of the eleventh century were imperfectly skilled in the liberal and mechanical arts; the objects of foreign luxury were furnished at an exorbitant price by the merchants of Pisa and Venice; and the superfluous wealth which could not purchase the real comforts of life, were idly wasted on some rare occasions of vanity and pomp. Such were the nuptials of Boniface, Duke or Marquis of Tuscany, whose family was long after united with that of Azo by the marriage of their children. These nuptials were celebrated on the banks of the Mincius which the fancy of Virgil has decorated with a more beautiful picture. The princes and people of Italy were invited to the feasts, which continued three months: the fertile meadows, which are intersected by the slow and winding course of the river, were covered with innumerable tents, and the bridegroom displayed and diversified the scenes of his proud and tasteless magnificence. All the utensils of the service were of silver, and his horses were shod with plates of the same metal, loosely nailed and carelessly dropped, to indicate his contempt of riches. An image of plenty and profusion was expressed in the banquet; the most delicious wines were drawn in buckets from the well; and the spices of the East were ground in water-mills like common flour. The dramatic and musical arts were in the rudest state; but the Marquis had summoned the most popular singers, harpers, aud buffoons to exercise their talents in this splendid theatre. After this festival I might remark a singular gift of this same Boniface to the Emperor Henry III., a chariot and oxen of solid silver, which were designed only as a vehicle for a hogshead of vinegar. If such an example should seem above the imitation of Azo himself, the Marquis of Este was at least superior in wealth and dignity to the vassals of his compeer. One of these vassals, the Viscount of Mantua, presented the German monarch with one hundred falcons and one hundred bay horses, a grateful contribution to the pleasures of a royal sportsman. In that age the proud distinction between the nobles and

princes of Italy was guarded with jealous ceremony. The Viscount of Mantua had never been seated at the table of his immediate lord; he yielded the invitation of the Emperor; and a stag's skin filled with pieces of gold was graciously accepted by the Marquis of Tuscany as the fine of his presumption.

"The temporal felicity of Azo was crowned by the long possession of honour and riches; he died in the year 1097, aged upwards of an hundred years; and the term of his mortal existence was almost commensurate with the lapse of the eleventh century. The character as well as the situation of the Marquis of Este rendered him an actor in the revolutions of that memorable period; but time has cast a veil over the virtues and vices of the man, and I must be content to mark some of the eras, the milestones of his which measure the extent and intervals of the vacant way. Albert Azo the Second was no more than seventeen when he first drew the sword of rebellion and patriotism, when he was involved with his grandfather, his father, and his three uncles in a common proscription. In the vigour of his manhood, about his fiftieth year, the Ligurian Marquis governed the cities of Milan and Genoa as the minister of Imperial authority. He was upwards of seventy when he passed the Alps to vindicate the inheritance of Maine for the children of his second marriage. He became the friend and servant of Gregory VII., and in one of his epistles that ambitious pontiff recommends the Marquis Azo, as the most faithful and best beloved of the Italian princes, as the proper channel through which a king of Hungary might convey his petitions to the apostolic throne. In the mighty contest between the crown and the mitre, the Marquis Azo and the Countess Matilda led the powers of Italy. And when the standard of St. Peter was displayed, neither the age of the one nor the sex of the other could detain them from the field. With these two affectionate clients the Pope maintained his station in the fortress of Canossa, while the Emperor, barefoot on the frozen ground, fasted and prayed three days at the foot of the rock; they were witnesses to the abject ceremony of the penance and pardon of Henry IV.; and in the triumph of the Church a patriot might foresee the deliverance of Italy from the German yoke. At the time of the event the Marquis of Este was above fourscore; but in the twenty following years he was still alive and active amidst the revolutions of peace and war. The last act which he subscribed is dated above a century after his birth; and in that the venerable chief possesses the command of his faculties, his family, and his fortune. In this rare prerogative the longevity of Albert Azo the Second stands alone. Nor can I remember in the *authentic* annals of mortality a single example of a king or prince, of a statesman or general, of a philosopher or poet, whose life has been extended beyond the period of a hundred years. . . . Three approximations which will not hastily be matched have distinguished the present century, Aurungzebe, Cardinal Fleury, and Fontenelle. Had a fortnight more been given to the philosopher, he might have celebrated his secular festival; but the lives and labours of the Mogul king and the French minister were terminated before they had accomplished their ninetieth year."

Then follow several striking and graceful pages on Lucrezia Borgia and Renée of France, Duchess of Ferrara. The following description of the University of Padua and the literary tastes of the house of Este is all that we can give here:—

"An university had been founded at Padua by the house of Este, and the scholastic rust was polished away by the revival of the literature of

Greece and Rome. The studies of Ferrara were directed by skilful and eloquent professors, either natives or foreigners. The ducal library was filled with a valuable collection of manuscripts and printed books, and as soon as twelve new plays of Plautus had been found in Germany, the Marquis Lionel of Este was impatient to obtain a fair and faithful copy of that ancient poet. Nor were these elegant pleasures confined to the learned world. Under the reign of Hercules I. a wooden theatre at a moderate cost of a thousand crowns was constructed in the largest court of the palace, the scenery represented some houses, a seaport and a ship, and the *Menechmi* of Plautus, which had been translated into Italian by the Duke himself, was acted before a numerous and polite audience. In the same language and with the same success the *Amphytrion* of Plautus and the *Eunuchus* of Terence were successively exhibited. And these classic models, which formed the taste of the spectators, excited the emulation of the poets of the age. For the use of the court and theatre of Ferrara, Ariosto composed his comedies, which were often played with applause, which are still read with pleasure. And such was the enthusiasm of the new arts that one of the sons of Alphonso the First did not disdain to speak a prologue on the stage. In the legitimate forms of dramatic composition the Italians have not excelled; but it was in the court of Ferrara that they invented and refined the *pastoral comedy*, a romantic Arcadia which violates the truth of manners and the simplicity of nature, but which commands our indulgence by the elaborate luxury of eloquence and wit. The *Aminta* of Tasso was written for the amusement and acted in the presence of Alphonso the Second, and his sister Leonora might apply to herself the language of a passion which disordered the reason without clouding the genius of her poetical lover. Of the numerous imitations, the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini, which alone can vie with the fame and merit of the original, is the work of the Duke's secretary of state. It was exhibited in a private house in Ferrara. . . . . The father of the Tuscan muses, the sublime but unequal Dante, had pronounced that Ferrara was never honoured with the name of a poet; he would have been astonished to behold the chorus of bards, of melodious swans (their own allusion), which now peopled the banks of the Po. In the court of Duke Borso and his successor, Boyardo Count Scandiano, was respected as a noble, a soldier, and a scholar: his vigorous fancy first celebrated the loves and exploits of the paladin Orlando; and his fame has been preserved and eclipsed by the brighter glories and continuation of his work. Ferrara may boast that on classic ground Ariosto and Tasso lived and sung; that the lines of the *Orlando Furioso*, the *Gierusalemme Liberata* were inscribed in everlasting characters under the eye of the First and Second Alphonso. In a period of near three thousand years, five great epic poets have arisen in the world, and it is a singular prerogative that two of the five should be claimed as their own by a short age and a petty state."

It perhaps will be admitted that if the style of these passages is less elaborate than that of the *Decline and Fall*, the deficiency, if it is one, is compensated by greater ease and lightness of touch.

It may be interesting to give a specimen of Gibbon's French style. His command of that language was not inferior to his command of his native idiom. One might even be inclined to say that his French prose is controlled by a purer taste than his English prose. The following excerpt, describing the Battle of Morgarten, will enable the reader to judge. It is taken from his early unfin-

ished work on the History of the Swiss Republic, to which reference has already been made (p. 59) :—

"Léopold était parti de Zug vers le milieu de la nuit. Il se flattait d'occuper sans résistance le défilé de Morgarten qui ne perçait qu'avec difficulté entre le lac Aegré et le pied d'une montagne escarpée. Il marchait à la tête de sa gendarmerie. Une colonne profond d'infanterie le suivait de près, et les uns et les autres se promettaient une victoire facile si les paysans osaient se présenter à leur rencontre. Ils étaient à peine entrés dans un chemin rude et étroit, et qui ne permettait qu'à trois ou quatre de marcher de front, qu'ils se sentirent accablés d'une grêle de pierres et de traits. Rodolphe de Reding, landamman de Schwitz et général des Confédérés, n'avait oublié aucun des avantages que lui offrit la situation des lieux. Il avait fait couper des roches énormes, qui en s'ébranlant dès qu'on retirait les faibles appuis qui les retenaient encore, se détachaient du sommet de la montaigne et se précipitaient avec un bruit affreux sur les bataillons serrés des Autrichiens. Déjà les chevaux s'éffrayaient, les rangs se confondaient, et le désordre égarait le courage et le rendait inutile, lorsque les Suisses descendirent de la montagne en poussant de grands cris. Accoutumés à poursuivre le chamois sur les bords glissants des précipices, ils couraient d'un pas assuré au milieu des neiges. Ils étaient armés de grosses et pesantes hallebardes, auxquelles le fer le mieux trempé ne résistait point. Les soldats de Léopold chancelants et découragés cédèrent bientôt aux efforts désespérés d'une troupe qui combattait pour tout ce qu'il y a de plus cher aux hommes. L'Abbé d'Einsidlen, premier auteur de cette guerre malheureuse, et le comte Henri de Montfort, donnèrent les premiers l'example de la fuite. Le désordre devint général, le carnage fut affreux, et les Suisses se livraient au plaisir de la vengeance. A neuf heures du matin la bataille était gagnée. . . . . Un grand nombre d'Autrichiens se précipitant les uns sur les autres, cherchèrent vainement dans le lac un asyle contre la fureur de leurs ennemis. Ils y périrent presque tous. Quinze cents hommes restèrent sur le champ de bataille. Ils étaient pour la plupart de la gendarmerie, qu'une valeur malheureuse et une armure pesante arrêtaient dans un lieu où l'un et l'autre étaient inutiles. Longtemps après l'on s'apercevait dans toutes les provinces voisines que l'élite de la noblesse avait péri dans cette fatale journée. L'infanterie beaucoup moins engagée dans le défilé, vit en tremblant la défaite des chevaliers qui passaient pour invincibles, et dont les escadrons effrayés se renversaient sur elle. Elle s'arrêta, voulut se retirer, et dans l'instant cette retraite devint une fuite honteuse. Sa perte fut assez peu considérable, mais les historiens de la nation ont conservé la mémoire de cinquante braves Zuriquois dont on trouva les rangs couchés morts sur la place. Léopold lui-même fut entrainé par la foule qui le portait du côté de Zug. On le vit entrer dans sa ville de Winterthur. La frayeur, la honte et l'indignation étaient encore peintes sur son front. Dès que la victoire se fut déclarée en faveur des Suisses, ils s'assemblèrent sur le champ de bataille, s'embrassèrent en versant des larmes d'allégresse, et remercièrent Dieu de la grace qu'il venait de leur faire, et qui ne leur avait coûté que quatorze de leurs compagnons."

His familiar letters and a number of essays, chiefly written in youth, form the remainder of the miscellaneous works. Of the letters, some have been quoted in this volume, and the reader can form his own judgment of them. Of the small essays we may say

that they augment, if it is possible, one's notion of Gibbon's laborious diligence and thoroughness in the field of historic research, and confirm his title to the character of an intrepid student.

The lives of scholars are proverbially dull, and that of Gibbon is hardly an exception to the rule. In the case of historians, the protracted silent labour of preparation, followed by the conscientious exposition of knowledge acquired, into which the intrusion of the writer's personality rarely appears to advantage, combine to give prominence to the work achieved, and to throw into the background the author who achieves it. If indeed the historian, forsaking his high function and austere reserve, succumbs to the temptations that beset his path, and turns history into political pamphlet, poetic rhapsody, moral epigram, or garish melodrama, he may become conspicuous to a fault at the expense of his work, Gibbon avoided these seductions. If the *Decline and Fall* has no superior in historical literature, it is not solely in consequence of Gibbon's profound learning, wide survey, and masterly grasp of his subject. With wise discretion, he subordinated himself to his task. The life of Gibbon is the less interesting, but his work remains monumental and supreme.

THACKERAY

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE.

BIOGRAPHICAL 7

CHAPTER II.

FRASER'S MAGAZINE AND PUNCH 42

CHAPTER III.

VANITY FAIR 59

CHAPTER IV.

PENDENNIS AND THE NEWCOMES 69

CHAPTER V.

ESMOND AND THE VIRGINIANS 77

CHAPTER VI.

THACKERAY'S BURLESQUES 87

THACKERAY.

CHAPTER I.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

In the foregoing volumes of this series of *English Men of Letters*, and in other works of a similar nature which have appeared lately as to the *Ancient Classics* and *Foreign Classics*, biography has naturally been, if not the leading, at any rate a considerable element. The desire is common to all readers to know not only what a great writer has written, but also of what nature has been the man who has produced such great work. As to all the authors taken in hand before, there has been extant some written record of the man's life. Biographical details have been more or less known to the world, so that, whether of a Cicero, or of a Goethe, or of our own Johnson, there has been a story to tell. Of Thackeray no life has been written; and though they who knew him—and possibly many who did not—are conversant with anecdotes of the man, who was one so well known in society as to have created many anecdotes, yet there has been no memoir of his life sufficient to supply the wants of even so small a work as this purports to be. For this the reason may simply be told. Thackeray, not long before his death, had had his taste offended by some fulsome biography. Paragraphs, of which the eulogy seemed to have been the produce rather of personal love than of inquiry or judgment, disgusted him, and he begged of his girls that when he should have gone there should nothing of the sort be done with his name.

We can imagine how his mind had worked, how he had declared to himself that, as by those loving hands into which his letters, his notes, his little details—his literary remains, as such documents used to be called—might naturally fall, truth of his foibles and of his shortcomings could not be told, so should not his praises be written, or that flattering portrait be limned which biographers are wont to produce. Acting upon these instructions, his daughters—while there were two living, and since that the one surviving—have carried out the order which has appeared to them to be sacred. Such being the case, it certainly is not my purpose now to write what may be called a life of Thackeray. In this preliminary chapter

I will give such incidents and anecdotes of his life as will tell the reader perhaps all about him that a reader is entitled to ask. I will tell how he became an author, and will say how first he worked and struggled, and then how he worked and prospered, and became a household word in English literature; how, in this way, he passed through that course of mingled failure and success which, though the literary aspirant may suffer, is probably better both for the writer and for the writings than unclouded early glory. The suffering, no doubt, is acute, and a touch of melancholy, perhaps of indignation, may be given to words which have been written while the heart has been too full of its own wrongs; but this is better than the continued note of triumph, which is still heard in the final voices of the spoilt child of literature, even when they are losing their music. Then I will tell how Thackeray died, early indeed, but still having done a good life's work. Something of his manner, something of his appearance I can say, something perhaps of his condition of mind; because for some years he was known to me. But of the continual intercourse of himself with the world, and of himself with his own works, I can tell little, because no record of his life has been made public.

William Makepeace Thackeray was born at Calcutta, on July 18, 1811. His father was Richmond Thackeray, son of W. M. Thackeray of Hadley, near Barnet, in Middlesex. A relation of his, of the same name, a Rev. Mr. Thackeray, I knew well as rector of Hadley, many years afterwards. Him I believe to have been a second cousin of our Thackeray, but I think they had never met each other. Another cousin was Provost of Kings at Cambridge, fifty years ago, as Cambridge men will remember. Clergymen of the family have been numerous in England during the century; and there was one, a Rev. Elias Thackeray, whom I also knew in my youth, a dignitary, if I remember right, in the diocese of Meath. The Thackerays seem to have affected the Church; but such was not at any period of his life the bias of our novelist's mind.

His father and grandfather were Indian civil servants. His mother was Anne Becher, whose father was also in the Company's service. She married early in India, and was only nineteen when her son was born. She was left a widow in 1816, with only one child, and was married a few years afterwards to Major Henry Carmichael Smyth, with whom Thackeray lived on terms of affectionate intercourse till the major died. All who knew William Makepeace remember his mother well, a handsome, spare, gray-haired lady, whom Thackeray treated with a courtly deference as well as constant affection. There was, however, something of discrepancy between them as to matters of religion. Mrs. Carmichael Smyth was disposed to the somewhat austere observance of the evangelical section of the Church. Such, certainly, never became the case with her son. There was disagreement on the subject. and probably unhappiness at intervals, but never, I think quarrelling. Thackeray's house was his mother's home whenever she pleased it, and the home also of his stepfather.

He was brought a child from India, and was sent early to the Charter House. Of his life and doings there his friend and schoolfellow George Venables writes to me as follows:

"My recollection of him, though fresh enough, does not furnish much material for biography. He came to school young—a pretty, gentle, and rather timid boy. I think his experience there was not generally pleasant. Though he had afterwards a scholarlike knowledge of Latin, he did not attain distinction in the school; and I should think that the character of the head-master, Dr. Russel, which was vigorous, unsympathetic, and stern, though not severe, was uncongenial to his own. With the boys who knew him, Thackeray was popular; but he had no skill in games, and, I think, no taste for them. . . . He was already known by his faculty of making verses, chiefly parodies. I only remember one line of one parody on a poem of L. E. L.'s, about 'Violets, dark blue violets;' Thackeray's version was 'Cabbages, bright green cabbages,' and we thought it very witty. He took part in a scheme, which came to nothing, for a school magazine, and he wrote verses for it, of which I only remember that they were good of their kind. When I knew him better, in later years, I thought I could recognize the sensitive nature which he had as a boy. . . . His change of retrospective feeling about his school days was very characteristic. In his earlier books he always spoke of the Charter House as Slaughter House and Smithfield. As he became famous and prosperous his memory softened, and Slaughter House was changed into Grey Friars, where Colonel Newcome ended his life."

In February, 1829, when he was not as yet eighteen, Thackeray went up to Trinity College. Cambridge, and was, I think, removed in 1830. It may be presumed, therefore, that his studies there were not very serviceable to him. There are few, if any, records left of his doings at the university—unless it be the fact that he did there commence the literary work of his life. The line about the cabbages, and the scheme of the school magazine, can hardly be said to have amounted even to a commencement. In 1829 a little periodical was brought out at Cambridge, called *The Snob*, with an assurance on the title that it was *not* conducted by members of the university. It is presumed that Thackeray took a hand in editing this. He certainly wrote, and published in the little paper, some burlesque lines on the subject which was given for the Chancellor's prize poem of the year. This was *Timbuctoo*, and Tennyson was the victor on the occasion. There is some good fun in the four first and four last lines of Thackeray's production.

In Africa—a quarter of the world—
Men's skins are black; their hair is crisped and curled;
And somewhere there, unknown to public view,
A mighty city lies, called Timbuctoo.

* * * * * * * *

I see her tribes the hill of glory mount,
And sell their sugars on their own account;
While round her throne the prostrate nations come,
Sue for her rice, and barter for her rum.

I cannot find in *The Snob* internal evidence of much literary merit beyond this. But then how many great writers have there been from whose early lucubrations no future literary excellence could be prognosticated?

There is something at any rate in the name of the publication which tells of work that did come. Thackeray's mind was at all times peculiarly exercised with a sense of snobbishness. His appreciation of the vice grew abnormally, so that at last he had a morbid horror of a snob—a morbid fear lest this or the other man should turn snob on his hands. It is probable that the idea was taken from the early *Snob* at Cambridge, either from his own participation in the work or from his remembrance of it. *The Snob* lived, I think, but nine weeks, and was followed at an interval, in 1830, by *The Gownsman*, which lived to the seventeenth number, and at the opening of which Thackeray no doubt had a hand. It professed to be a continuation of *The Snob*. It contains a dedication to all proctors, which I should not be sorry to attribute to him. "To all Proctors, past, present, and future—

Whose taste it is our privilege to follow,
Whose virtue it is our duty to imitate,
Whose presence it is our interest to avoid."

There is, however, nothing beyond fancy to induce me to believe that Thackeray was the author of the dedication, and I do not know that there is any evidence to show that he was connected with *The Snob* beyond the writing of *Timbuctoo*.

In 1830 he left Cambridge, and went to Weimar either in that year or in 1831. Between Weimar and Paris he spent some portion of his earlier years, while his family—his mother, that is, and his stepfather—were living in Devonshire. It was then the purport of his life to become an artist, and he studied drawing at Paris, affecting especially Bonnington, the young English artist who had himself painted at Paris, and who had died in 1828. He never learned to draw—perhaps never could have learned. That he was idle, and did not do his best, we may take for granted. He was always idle, and only on some occasions, when the spirit moved him thoroughly, did he do his best even in after-life. But with drawing—or rather without it—he did wonderfully well even when he did his worst. He did illustrate his own books, and everyone knows how incorrect were his delineations. But as illustrations they were excellent. How often have I wished that characters of my own creating might be sketched as faultily, if with the same appreciation of the intended purpose. Let anyone look at the "plates," as they are called in *Vanity Fair*, and compare each with the scenes and the characters intended to be displayed, and

there see whether the artist—if we may call him so—has not managed to convey in the picture the exact feeling which he has described in the text. I have a little sketch of his, in which a cannon-ball is supposed to have just carried off the head of an aide-de-camp—messenger I had perhaps better say, lest I might affront military feelings—who is kneeling on the field of battle and delivering a despatch to Marlborough on horseback. The graceful ease with which the duke receives the message though the messenger's head be gone, and the soldier-like precision with which the headless hero finishes his last effort of military obedience, may not have been portrayed with well-drawn figures, but no finished illustration ever told its story better. Dickens has informed us that he first met Thackeray in 1835, on which occasion the young artist aspirant, looking no doubt after profitable employment, "proposed to become the illustrator of my earliest book." It is singular that such should have been the first interview between the two great novelists. We may presume that the offer was rejected.

In 1832, Thackeray came of age, and inherited his fortune—as to which various stories have been told. It seems to have amounted to about five hundred a year, and to have passed through his hands in a year or two, interest and principal. It has been told of him that it was all taken away from him at cards, but such was not the truth. Some went in an Indian bank in which he invested it. A portion was lost at cards. But with some of it—the larger part, as I think—he endeavoured, in concert with his stepfather, to float a newspaper, which failed. There seem to have been two newspapers in which he was so concerned, *The National Standard* and *The Constitutional.* On the latter he was engaged with his stepfather, and in carrying that on he lost the last of his money. *The Natoinal Standard* had been running for some weeks when Thackeray joined it, and lost his money in it. It ran only for little more than twelve months, and then, the money having gone, the periodical came to an end. I know no road to fortune more tempting to a young man, or one that with more certainty leads to ruin. Thackeray, who in a way more or less correct, often refers in his writings, if not to the incidents, at any rate to the remembrances of his own life, tells us much of the story of this newspaper in *Lovel the Widower.* "They are welcome," says the bachelor, "to make merry at my charges in respect of a certain bargain which I made on coming to London, and in which, had I been Moses Primrose purchasing green spectacles, I could scarcely have been more taken in. My Jenkinson was an old college acquaintance, whom I was idiot enough to imagine a respectable man. The fellow had a very smooth tongue and sleek sanctified exterior. He was rather a popular preacher, and used to cry a good deal in the pulpit. He and a queer wine-merchant and bill discounter, Sherrick by name, had somehow got possession of that neat little literary paper, *The Museum*, which perhaps you remember, and this eligible literary property my friend Honeyman, with his wheedling tongue, induced me to purchase." Here is the history of Thackeray's money, told

by himself plainly enough, but with no intention on his part of narrating an incident in his own life to the public. But the drollery of the circumstances, his own mingled folly and young ambition, struck him as being worth narration, and the more forcibly as he remembered all the ins and outs of his own reflections at the time —how he had meant to enchant the world, and make his fortune. There was literary capital in it of which he could make use after so many years. Then he tells us of this ambition, and of the folly of it; and at the same time puts forward the excuses to be made for it. "I daresay I gave myself airs as editor of that confounded *Museum*, and proposed to educate the public taste, to diffuse morality and sound literature throughout the nation, and to pocket a liberal salary in return for my services. I daresay I printed my own sonnets, my own tragedy, my own verses. . . . I daresay I wrote satirical articles. . . . I daresay I made a gaby of myself to the world. Pray, my good friend, hast thou never done likewise? If thou hast never been a fool, be sure thou wilt never be a wise man." Thackeray was quite aware of his early weaknesses, and in the maturity of life knew well that he had not been precociously wise. He delighted so to tell his friends, and he delighted also to tell the public, not meaning that any but an inner circle should know that he was speaking of himself. But the story now is plain to all who can read.*

It was thus that he lost his money; and then, not having prospered very well with his drawing lessons in Paris or elsewhere, he was fain to take up literature as a profession. It is a business which has its allurements. It requires no capital, no special education, no training, and may be taken up at any time without a moment's delay. If a man can command a table, a chair, a pen, paper, and ink, he can commence his trade as literary man. It is thus that aspirants generally do commence it. A man may or may not have another employment to back him, or means of his own; or—as was the case with Thackeray, when, after his first misadventure, he had to look about him for the means of living—he may have nothing but his intellect and his friends. But the idea comes to the man that as he has the pen and ink, and time on his hand, why should he not write and make money?

It is an idea that comes to very many men and women, old as well as young—to many thousands who at last are crushed by it, of whom the world knows nothing. A man can make the attempt though he has not a coat fit to go out into the street with; or a woman, though she be almost in rags. There is no apprenticeship wanted. Indeed, there is no room for such apprenticeship. It is an art which no one teaches; there is no professor who, in a dozen lessons, even pretends to show the aspirant how to write a book or an article. If you would be a watchmaker, you must learn;

* The report that he had lost all his money and was going to live by painting in Paris, was still prevalent in London in 1836. Macready, on the 27th April of that year, says in his *Diary*: "At Garrick Club, where I dined and saw the papers. Met Thackeray, who has spent all his fortune, and is now about to settle in Paris, I believe as an artist." But at this time he was, in truth, turning to literature as a profession.

or a lawyer, a cook, or even a housemaid. Before you can clean a horse you must go into the stable, and begin at the beginning. Even the cab-driving tiro must sit for awhile on the box, and learn something of the streets, before he can ply for a fare. But the literary beginner rushes at once at the top rung of his ladder—as though a youth, having made up his mind to be a clergyman, should demand without preliminary steps, to be appointed Bishop of London. That he should be able to read and write is presumed, and that only. So much may be presumed of everyone, and nothing more is wanted.

In truth nothing more is wanted—except those inner lights as to which so many men live and die without having learned whether they possess them or not. Practice, industry, study of literature, cultivation of taste, and the rest, will of course lend their aid, will probably be necessary before high excellence is attained. But the instances are not to seek—are at the fingers of us all—in which the first uninstructed effort has succeeded. A boy, almost, or perhaps an old woman, has sat down and the book has come, and the world has read it, and the booksellers have been civil and have written their cheques. When all trades, all professions, all seats at offices, all employments at which a crust can be earned, are so crowded that a young man knows not where to look for the means of livelihood, is there not an attraction in this which to the self confident must be almost invincible? The booksellers are courteous and write their cheques, but that is not half the whole? *Monstrari digito!* That is obtained. The happy aspirant is written of in newspapers, or, perhaps, better still, he writes of others. When the barrister of forty-five has hardly got a name beyond Chancery Lane, this glorious young scribe, with the first down on his lips, has printed his novel and been talked about.

The temptation is irresistible, and thousands fall into it. How is a man to know that he is not the lucky one or the gifted one? There is the table, and there the pen and ink. Among the unfortunate, he who fails altogether and from the first start is not the most unfortunate. A short period of life is wasted, and a sharp pang is endured. Then the disappointed one is relegated to the condition of life which he would otherwise have filled a little earlier. He has been wounded, but not killed, or even maimed. But he who has a little success, who succeeds in earning a few halcyon, but ah! so dangerous guineas, is drawn into a trade from which he will hardly escape till he be driven from it, if he come out alive, by sheer hunger. He hangs on till the guineas become crowns and shillings—till some sad record of his life, made when he applies for charity, declares that he has worked hard for the last year or two, and has earned less than a policeman in the streets or a porter at a railway. It is to that that he is brought by applying himself to a business which requires only a table and chair, with pen, ink, and paper! It is to that which he is brought by venturing to believe that he has been gifted with powers of imagination, creation, and expression.

The young man who makes the attempt knows that he must run the chance. He is well aware that nine must fail where one will make his running good. So much as that does reach his ears and recommends itself to his common-sense. But why should it not be he as well as another? There is always some lucky one winning the prize. And this prize when it has been won is so well worth the winning! He can endure starvation—so he tells himself—as well as another. He will try. But yet he knows that he has but one chance out of ten in his favour, and it is only in his happier moments that he flatters himself that that remains to him. Then there falls upon him—in the midst of that labour which for its success especially requires that a man's heart shall be light, and that he be always at his best—doubt and despair. If there be no chance, of what use is his labor?

> Were it not better done as others use,
> To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,

and amuse himself after that fashion? Thus the very industry which alone could give him a chance is discarded. It is so that the young man feels who, with some slight belief in himself and with many doubts, sits down to commence the literary labor by which he hopes to live.

So it was, no doubt, with Thackeray. Such were his hopes and his fears—with a resolution of which we can well understand that it should have waned at times, of earning his bread, if he did not make his fortune, in the world of literature. One has not to look far for evidence of the condition I have described—that it was so, Amaryllis and all. How or when he made his very first attempt in London, I have not learned; but he had not probably spent his money without forming "press" acquaintances, and had thus formed an aperture for the thin end of the wedge. He wrote for *The Constitutional*, of which he was part proprietor, beginning his work for that paper as a correspondent from Paris. For awhile he was connected with *The Times* newspaper, though his work there did not, I think, amount to much. His first regular employment was on *Fraser's Magazine*, when Mr. Fraser's shop was in Regent Street, when Oliver Yorke was the presumed editor, and among contributors, Carlyle was one of the most notable. I imagine that the battle of life was difficult enough with him even after he had become one of the leading props of that magazine. All that he wrote was not taken, and all that was taken was not approved. In 1837-38, the *History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond* appeared in the magazine. The *Great Hoggarty Diamond* is now known to all readers of Thackeray's works. It is not my purpose to speak specially of it here, except to assert that it has been thought to be a great success. When it was being brought out, the author told a friend of his—and of mine—that it was not much thought of at Fraser's, and that he had been called upon to shorten it. That is an incident disagree-

able in its nature to any literary gentleman, and likely to be specially so when he knows that his provision of bread, certainly of improved bread and butter, is at stake. The man who thus darkens his literary brow with the frown of disapproval, has at his disposal all the loaves and all the fishes that are going. If the writer be successful, there will come a time when he will be above such frowns; but, when that opinion went forth, Thackeray had not yet made his footing good, and the notice to him respecting it must have been very bitter. It was in writing this *Hoggarty Diamond* that Thackeray first invented the name of Michael Angelo Titmarsh. Samuel Titmarsh was the writer, whereas Michael Angelo was an intending illustrator. Thackeray's nose had been broken in a school fight, while he was quite a little boy, by another little boy, at the Charter House; and there was probably some association intended to be jocose with the name of the great artist, whose nose was broken by his fellow-student Torrigiano, and who, as it happened, died exactly three centuries before Thackeray.

I can understand all the disquietude of his heart when that warning, as to the too great length of his story, was given to him. He was not a man capable of feeling at any time quite assured in his position, and when that occurred he was very far from assurance. I think that at no time did he doubt the sufficiency of his own mental qualification for the work he had taken in hand: but he doubted all else. He doubted the appreciation of the world; he doubted his fitness for turning his intellect to valuable account; he doubted his physical capacity—dreading his own lack of industry; he doubted his luck; he doubted the continual absence of some of those misfortunes on which the works of literary men are shipwrecked. Though he was aware of his own power, he always, to the last, was afraid that his own deficiences should be too strong against him. It was his nature to be idle—to put off his work—and then to be angry with himself for putting it off. Ginger was hot in the mouth with him, and all the allurements of the world were strong upon him. To find on Monday morning an excuse why he should not on Monday do Monday's work was, at the time, an inexpressible relief to him, but had become a deep regret—almost a remorse—before the Monday was over. To such a one it was not given to believe in himself with that sturdy rock-bound foundation which we see to have belonged to some men from the earliest struggles of their career. To him, then, must have come an inexpressible pang when he was told that his story must be curtailed.

Who else would have told such a story of himself to the first acquaintance he chanced to meet? Of Thackeray it might be predicted that he certainly wound do so. No little would of the kind ever came to him but what he disclosed it at once. "They have only bought so many of my new book." "Have you seen the abuse of my last number?" "What am I to turn my hand to? They are getting tired of my novels." "They don't read it," he said to me of *Esmond*. "So you don't mean to publish my

work?" he said once to a publisher in an open company. Other men keep their little troubles to themselves. I have heard even of authors who have declared how all the publishers were running after their books; I have heard some discourse freely of their fourth and fifth editions; I have known an author to boast of his thousands sold in this country, and his tens of thousands in America; but I never heard anyone else declare that no one would read his *chef-d'œuvre*, and that the world was becoming tired of him. It was he who said, when he was fifty, that a man past fifty should never write a novel.

And yet, as I have said, he was from an early age fully conscious of his own ability. That he was so is to be seen in the handling of many of his early works—in *Barry Lyndon*, for instance, and the *Memoirs of Mr. C. James Yellowplush.* The sound is too certain for doubt of that kind. But he had not then, nor did he ever achieve that assurance of public favour which makes a man confident that his work will be successful. During the years of which we are now speaking Thackeray was a literary Bohemian in this sense—that he never regarded his own status as certain. While performing much of the best of his life's work he was not sure of his market, not certain of his readers, his publishers, or his price; nor was he certain of himself.

It is impossible not to form some contrast between him and Dickens as to this period of his life—a comparison not as to their literary merits, but literary position. Dickens was one year his junior in age, and at this time, viz., 1837–38, had reached almost the zenith of his reputation. *Pickwick* had been published, and *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* were being published. All the world was talking about the young author who was assuming his position with a confidence in his own powers which was fully justified both by his present and future success. It was manifest that he could make not only his own fortune, but that of his publishers, and that he was a literary hero bound to be worshipped by all literary grades of men, down to the "devils" of the printing-office. All that time Thackeray, the older man, was still doubting, still hesitating, still struggling. Everyone then had accepted the name of Charles Dickens. That of William Thackeray was hardly known beyond the circle of those who are careful to make themselves acquainted with such matters. It was then the custom, more generally than it is at present, to maintain anonymous writing in magazines. Now, if anything of special merit be brought out, the name of the author, if not published, is known. It was much less so at the period in question; and as the world of readers began to be acquainted with Jeames Yellowplush, Catherine Hayes, and other heroes and heroines, the name of the author had to be inquired for. I remember myself, when I was already well acquainted with the immortal Jeames, asking who was the writer. The works of Charles Dickens were at that time as well known to be his, and as widely read in England, as those almost of Shakespeare.

It will be said, of course, that this came from the earlier popu-

larity of Dickens. That is of course; but why should it have been so? They had begun to make their effort much at the same time; and if there was any advantage in point of position as they commenced, it was with Thackeray. It might be said that the genius of the one was brighter than that of the other, or, at any rate, that it was more precocious. But after-judgment has, I think, not declared either of the suggestions to be true. I will make no comparison between two such rivals, who were so distinctly different from each, and each of whom, within so very short a period, has come to stand on a pedestal so high—the two exalted to so equal a vocation. And if Dickens showed the best of his power early in life, so did Thackeray the best of his intellect. In no display of mental force did he rise above *Barry Lyndon*. I hardly know how the teller of a narrative shall hope to mount in simply intellectual faculty above the effort there made. In what, then, was the difference? Why was Dickens already a great man when Thackeray was still a literary Bohemian?

The answer is to be found not in the extent or in the nature of the genius of either man, but in the condition of mind—which indeed may be read plainly in their works by those who have eyes to see. The one was steadfast, industrious, full of purpose, never doubting of himself, always putting his best foot foremost and standing firmly on it when he got it there; with no inward trepidation, with no moments in which he was half inclined to think that this race was not for his winning, this goal not to be reached by his struggles. The sympathy of friends was good to him, but he could have done without it. The good opinion which he had of himself was never shaken by adverse criticism; and the criticism on the other side, by which it was exalted, came from the enumeration of the number of copies sold. He was a firm, reliant man, very little prone to change, who, when he had discovered the nature of his own talent, knew how to do the very best with it.

It may almost be said that Thackeray was the very opposite of this. Unsteadfast, idle, changeable of purpose, aware of his own intellect but not trusting it, no man ever failed more generally than he to put his best foot foremost. Full as his works are of pathos, full of humour, full of love and charity, tending, as they always do, to truth and honour, and manly worth and womanly modesty, excelling, as they seem to me to do, most other written precepts that I know, they always seem to lack something that might have been there. There is a touch of vagueness which indicates that his pen was not firm while he was using it. He seems to me to have been dreaming ever of some high flight, and then to have told himself, with a half-broken heart, that it was beyond his power to soar up into those bright regions. I can fancy, as the sheets went from him every day, he told himself, in regard to every sheet, that it was a failure. Dickens was quite sure of his sheets.

"I have got to make it shorter!" Then he would put his hands in his pockets, and stretch himself, and straighten the lines of his face, over which a smile would come, as though this intimation

from his editor were the best joke in the world; and he would walk away, with his heart bleeding, and every nerve in an agony. There are none of us who want to have much of his work shortened now.

In 1837 Thackeray married Isabella, daughter of Colonel Matthew Shawe, and from this union there came three daughters, Anne, Jane, and Harriet. The name of the eldest, now Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, who has followed so closely in her father's steps, is a household word to the world of novel readers; the second died as a child; the younger lived to marry Leslie Stephen, who is too well known for me to say more than that he wrote, the other day, the little volume on Dr. Johnson in this series; but she, too, has now followed her father. Of Thackeray's married life what need be said shall be contained in a very few words. It was grievously unhappy: but the misery of it came from God, and was in no wise due to human fault. She became ill, and her mind failed her. There was a period during which he would not believe that her illness was more than illness, and then he clung to her and waited on her with an assiduity of affection which only made his task the more painful to him. At last it became evident that she should live in the companionship of some one with whom her life might be altogether quiet, and she has since been domiciled with a lady with whom she has been happy. Thus she was, after but a few years of married life, taken away from him, and he became, as it were, a widower till the end of his days.

At this period, and indeed for some years after his marriage, his chief literary dependence was on *Fraser's Magazine.* He wrote also at this time in the *New Monthly Magazine.* In 1840 he brought out his *Paris Sketch Book*, as to which he tells us, by a notice printed with the first edition, that half of the sketches had already been published in various periodicals. Here he used the name Michael Angelo Titmarsh, as he did also with the *Journey from Cornhill to Cairo.* Dickens had called himself Boz, and clung to the name with persistency as long as the public would permit it. Thackeray's affection for assumed names was more intermittent, though I doubt whether he used his own name altogether till it appeared on the title-page of *Vanity Fair.* About this time began his connection with *Punch*, in which much of his best work appeared. Looking back at our old friend as he used to come out from week to week at this time, we can hardly boast that we used to recognize how good the literary pabulum was that was then given for our consumption. We have to admit that the ordinary reader, as the ordinary picture-seer, requires to be guided by a name. We are moved to absolute admiration by a Raphael or a Hobbema, but hardly till we have learned the name of the painter, or, at any rate, the manner of his painting. I am not sure that all lovers of poetry would recognise a *Lycidas* coming from some hitherto unknown Milton. Gradually the good picture or the fine poem makes its way into the minds of a slowly discerning public. *Punch*, no doubt, became very popular, owing, perhaps,

more to Leech, its artist, than to any other single person. Gradually the world of readers began to know that there was a speciality of humour to be found in its pages—fun and sense, satire and good-humour, compressed together in small literary morsels as the nature of its columns required. Gradually the name of Thackeray as one of the band of brethren was buzzed about, and gradually became known as that of the chief of the literary brothers. But during the years in which he did much for *Punch*, say from 1843 to 1853, he was still struggling to make good his footing in literature. They knew him well in the *Punch* office, and no doubt the amount and regularity of the cheques from Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, the then and still owners of that happy periodical, made him aware that he had found for himself a satisfactory career. In "a good day for himself, the journal, and the world, Thackeray found *Punch*." This was said by his old friend Shirley Brooks, who himself lived to be editor of the paper and died in harness, and was said most truly. *Punch* was more congenial to him, and no doubt more generous, than *Fraser*. There was still something of the literary Bohemian about him, but not as it had been before. He was still unfixed, looking out for some higher career, not altogether satisfied to be no more than one of an anonymous band of brothers, even though the brothers were the brothers of *Punch*. We can only imagine what were his thoughts as to himself and that other man, who was then known as the great novelist of the day—of a rivalry with whom he was certainly conscious. *Punch* was very much to him, but was not quite enough. That must have been very clear to himself as he meditated the beginning of *Vanity Fair*.

Of the contributions to the periodical, the best known now are *The Snob Papers* and *The Ballads of Policeman X*. But they were very numerous. Of Thackeray as a poet, or maker of verses, I will say a few works in a chapter which will be devoted to his own so-called ballads. Here it seems only necessary to remark that there was not apparently any time in his career at which he began to think seriously of appearing before the public as a poet. Such was the intention early in their career with many of our best known prose writers, with Milton, and Goldsmith, and Samuel Johnson, with Scott, Macaulay, and more lately with Matthew Arnold; writers of verse and prose who ultimately prevailed some in one direction, and others in the other. Milton and Goldsmith have been known best as poets, Johnson and Macaulay as writers of prose. But with all of them there has been a distinct effort in each art. Thackeray seems to have tumbled into versification by accident; writing it as amateurs do, a little now and again for his own delectation, and to catch the tastes of partial friends. The reader feels that Thackeray would not have begun to print his verses unless the opportunity of doing so had been brought in his way by his doings in prose. And yet he had begun to write verses when he was very young;—at Cambridge, as we have seen, when he contributed more to the fame of Timbuctoo than I think even

Tennyson has done—and in his early years at Paris. Here again, though he must have felt the strength of his own mingled humour and pathos, he always struck with an uncertain note till he had gathered strength and confidence by popularity. Good as they generally were, his verses were accidents, written not as a writer writes who claims to be a poet, but as though they might have been the relaxations of a doctor or a barrister.

And so they were. When Thackeray first settled himself in London, to make his living among the magazines and newpapers, I do not imagine that he counted much on his poetic powers. He describes it all in his own dialogue between the pen and the album.

"Since he," says the pen, speaking of its master, Thackeray;

> "Since he my faithful service did engage,
> To follow him through his queer pilgrimage,
> I've drawn and written many a line and page.
>
> "Caricatures I scribbled have, and rhymes,
> And dinner-cards, and picture pantomimes,
> And many little children's books at times.
>
> "I've writ the foolish fancy of his brain;
> The aimless jest that, striking, hath caused pain
> The idle word that he'd wish back again.
>
> "I've helped him to pen many a line for bread."

It was thus he thought of his work. There had been caricatures, and rhymes, and many little children's books; and then the lines written for his bread, which, except that they were written for *Punch*, was hardly undertaken with a more serious purpose. In all of it there was ample seriousness, had he known it himself. What a tale of the restlessness, of the ambition, of the glory, of the misfortunes of a great country is given in the ballads of Peter the French drummer! Of that brain so full of fancy the pen had lightly written all the fancies. He did not know it when he was doing so, but with that word fancy he has described exactly the gift with which his brain was specially endowed. If a writer be accurate, or sonorous, or witty, or simply pathetic, he may, I think, gauge his own powers. He may do so after experience with something of certainty. But fancy is a gift which the owner of it cannot measure, and the power of which, when he is using it, he cannot himself understand. There is the same lambent flame flickering over everything he did, even the dinner-cards and the picture pantomimes. He did not in the least know what he put into those things. So it was with his verses. It was only by degrees, when he was told of it by others, that he found that they too were of infinite value to him in his profession.

The *Irish Sketch Book* came out in 1843, in which he used, but only half used, the name of Michael Angelo Titmarsh. He dedicates it to Charles Lever, and in signing the dedication gave his

own name. "Laying aside," he says, "for a moment the travelling title of Mr. Titmarsh, let me acknowledge these favours in my own name, and subscribe myself, &c., &c., W. M. Thackeray." So he gradually fell into the declaration of his own identity. In 1844 he made his journey to Turkey and Egypt—*From Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, as he called it, still using the old *nom de plume*, but again signing the dedication with his own name. It was now made to the captain of the vessel in which he encountered that famous white squall, in describing which he has shown the wonderful power he had over words.

In 1846 was commenced, in numbers, the novel which first made his name well known to the world. This was *Vanity Fair*, a work to which it is evident that he devoted all his mind. Up to this time his writings had consisted of short contributions, chiefly of sketches, each intended to stand by itself in the periodical to which it was sent. *Barry Lyndon* had hitherto been the longest; but that and *Catherine Hays* and the *Hoggarty Diamond*, though stories continued through various numbers, had not yet reached the dignity—or at any rate the length—of a three-volume novel. But of late novels had grown to be much longer than those of the old well-known measure. Dickens had stretched his to nearly double the length, and had published them in twenty numbers. The attempt had caught the public taste, and had been pre-eminently successful. The nature of the tale as originated by him was altogether unlike that to which the readers of modern novels had been used. No plot, with an arranged catastrophe or *dénoûment*, was necessary. Some untying of the various knots of the narrative no doubt were expedient, but these were of the simplest kind, done with the view of giving an end to that which might otherwise be endless. The adventures of a *Pickwick* or a *Nickleby* required very little of a plot, and this mode of telling a story, which might be continued on through any number of pages, as long as the characters were interesting, met with approval. Thackeray, who had never depended much on his plot in the shorter tales which he had hitherto told, determined to adopt the same form in his first great work but with these changes:—That as the central character with Dickens had always been made beautiful with unnatural virtue—for who was ever so unselfish as *Pickwick*, so manly and modest as *Nicholas*, or so good a boy as *Oliver?*—so should his centre of interest be in every respect abnormally bad.

As to Thackeray's reason for this—or rather as to that condition of mind which brought about this result—I will say something in a final chapter, in which I will endeavor to describe the nature and effect of his work generally. Here it will be necessary only to declare that, such was the choice he now made of a subject in his first attempt to rise out of a world of small literary contributions, into the more assured position of the author of a work of importance. We are aware that the monthly nurses of periodical literature did not at first smile on the effort. The proprietors of magazines did not see their way to undertake *Vanity Fair*, and the

publishers are said to have generally looked shy upon it. At last it was brought out in numbers—twenty-four numbers instead of twenty, as with those by Dickens—under the guardian hands of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans. This was completed in 1848, and then it was that, at the age of thirty-seven, Thackeray first achieved for himself a name and reputation through the country. Before this he had been known at *Fraser's* and at the *Punch* office. He was known at the Garrick Club, and had become individually popular among literary men in London. He had made many fast friends, and had been, as it were, found out by persons of distinction. But Jones, and Smith, and Robinson, in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, did not know him as they knew Dickens, Carlyle, Tennyson, and Macaulay—not as they knew Landseer, or Stansfeld, or Turner; not as they knew Macready, Charles Kean, or Miss Faucit. In that year, 1848, his name became common in the memoirs of the time. On the 5th of June I find him dining with Macready, to meet Sir J. Wilson, Panizzi, Landseer, and others. A few days afterwards Macready dined with him. "Dined with Thackeray, met the Gordons, Kenyons, Procters, Reeve, Villiers, Evans, Stansfeld, and saw Mrs. Sartoris and S. C. Dance, White, H. Goldsmid, in the evening." Again: "Dined with Forster, having called and taken up Brookfield, met Rintoul, Kenyon, Procter, Kinglake, Alfred Tennyson, Thackeray." Macready was very accurate in jotting down the names of those he entertained, who entertained him, or were entertained with him. *Vanity Fair* was coming out, and Thackeray, had become one of the personages in literary society. In the January number of 1848 the *Edinburgh Review* had an article on Thackeray's works generally as they were then known. It purports to combine the *Irish Sketch Book*, the *Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, and *Vanity Fair* as far as it had then gone; but it does in truth deal chiefly with the literary merits of the latter. I will quote a passage from the article, as proving in regard to Thackeray's work an opinion which was well founded, and as telling the story of his life as far as it was then known:

"Full many a valuable truth," says the reviewer, "has been sent undulating through the air by men who have lived and died unknown. At this moment the rising generation are supplied with the best of their mental aliment by writers whose names are a dead letter to the mass; and among the most remarkable of these is Michael Angelo Titmarsh, alias William Makepeace Thackeray, author of the *Irish Sketch Book*, of *A Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, of *Jeames's Diary*, of *The Snob Papers* in *Punch*, of *Vanity Fair*, &c., &c.

"Mr. Thackeray is now about thirty-seven years of age, of a good family, and originally intended for the bar. He kept seven or eight terms at Cambridge, but left the university without taking a degree, with the view of becoming an artist; and we well remember, ten or twelve years ago, finding him day after day engaged in copying pictures in the Louvre, in order to qualify himself for his

intended profession. It may be doubted, however, whether any degree of assiduity would have enabled him to excel in the money-making branches, for his talent was altogether of the Hogarth kind, and was principally remarkable in the pen-and-ink sketches of character and situation, which he dashed off for the amusement of his friends. At the end of two or three years of desultory application he gave up the notion of becoming a painter, and took to literature. He set up and edited with marked ability a weekly journal, on the plan of *The Athenæum* and *Literary Gazette*, but was unable to compete successfully with such long-established rivals. He then became a regular man of letters—that is, he wrote for respectable magazines and newspapers, until the attention attracted to his contributions in *Fraser's Magazine* and *Punch* emboldened him to start on his own account, and risk an independent publication." Then follows a eulogistic and, as I think, a correct criticism on the book as far as it had gone. There are a few remarks perhaps a little less eulogistic as to some of his minor writings, *The Snob Papers* in particular; and at the end there is a statement with which I think we shall all now agree: "A writer with such a pen and pencil as Mr. Thackeray's is an acquisition of real and high value in our literature."

The reviewer has done his work in a tone friendly to the author, whom he knew*—as indeed it may be said that this little book will be written with the same feeling—but the public has already recognised the truth of the review generally. There can be no doubt that Thackeray, though he had hitherto been but a contributor of anonymous pieces to periodicals—to what is generally considered as merely the ephemeral literature of the month—had already become effective on the tastes and morals of readers. Affectation of finery; the vulgarity which apes good breeding but never approaches it; dishonest gambling, whether with dice or with railway shares; and that low taste for literary excitement which is gratified by mysterious murders and Old Bailey executions, had already received condign punishment from Yellowplush, Titmarsh, Fitzboodle, and Ikey Solomon. Under all those names Thackeray had plied his trade as a satirist. Though the truths, as the reviewer said, had been merely sent undulating through the air, they had already become effective.

Thackeray had now become a personage—one of the recognised stars of the literary heaven of the day. It was an honour to know him; and we may well believe that the givers of dinners were proud to have him among their guests. He had opened his oyster with his pen—an achievement which he cannot be said to have accomplished until *Vanity Fair* had come out. In inquiring about him from those who survive him, and knew him well in those days, I always hear the same account. "If I could only tell you the impromptu lines which fell from him!" "If I had only kept the

* The article was written by Abraham Hayward, who is still with us, and was no doubt instigated by a desire to assist Thackeray in his struggle upwards, in which it succeeded.

drawings from his pen, which used to be chucked about as though they were worth nothing!" "If I could only remember the drolleries!" Had they been kept, there might now be many volumes of these sketches, as to which the reviewer says that their talent was "altogether of the Hogarth kind." Could there be any kind more valuable? Like Hogarth, he could always make his picture tell his story; though, unlike Hogarth, he had not learned to draw. I have had sent to me for my inspection an album of drawings and letters, which, in the course of twenty years, from 1829 to 1849, were despatched from Thackeray to his old friend Edward Fitzgerald. Looking at the wit displayed in the drawings, I feel inclined to say that had he persisted he would have been a second Hogarth. There is a series of ballet scenes, in which "Flore et Zephyr" are the two chief performers, which for expression and drollery exceed anything that I know of the kind. The set in this book are lithographs, which were published, but I do not remember to have seen them elsewhere. There are still among us many who knew him well—Edward Fitzgerald and George Venables, James Spedding and Kinglake, Mrs. Procter,—the widow of Barry Cornwall, who loved him well—and Monckton Milnes, as he used to be, whose touching lines written just after Thackeray's death will close this volume, Frederick Pollock and Frank Fladgate, John Blackwood and William Russell—and they all tell the same story. Though he so rarely talked, as good talkers do, and was averse to sit down to work, there were always falling from his mouth and pen those little pearls. Among the friends who had been kindest and dearest to him in the days of his strugglings he once mentioned three to me—Matthew Higgins, or Jacob Omnium, as he was more popularly called; William Stirling, who became Sir William Maxwell; and Russell Sturgis, who is now the senior partner in the great house of Barings. Alas, only the last of these three is left among us! Thackeray was a man of no great power of conversation. I doubt whether he ever shone in what is called general society. He was not a man to be valuable at a dinner-table as a good talker. It was when there were but two or three together that he was happy himself and made others happy; and then it would rather be from some special piece of drollery that the joy of the moment would come, than from the discussion of ordinary topics. After so many years his old friends remember the fag-ends of the doggerel lines which used to drop from him without any effort on all occasions of jollity. And though he could be very sad—laden with melancholy, as I think must have been the case with him always—the feeling of fun would quickly come to him, and the queer rhymes would be poured out as plentifully as the sketches were made. Here is a contribution which I find hanging in the memory of an old friend, the serious nature of whose literary labours would certainly have driven such lines from his mind, had they not at the time caught fast hold of him:

"In the romantic little town of Highbury
My father kept a circulatin' library;

He followed in his youth that man immortal, who
Conquered the Frenchmen on the plains of Waterloo.
Mamma was an inhabitant of Drogheda,
Very good she was to darn and to embroider.
In the famous island of Jamaica,
For thirty years I've been a sugar-baker;
And here I sit, the Muses' 'appy vot'ry,
A cultivatin' every kind of po'try."

There may, perhaps, have been a mistake in a line, but the poem has been handed down with fair correctness over a period of forty years. He was always versifying. He once owed me five pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence, his share of a dinner bill at Richmond. He sent me a check for the amount in rhyme, giving the proper financial document on the second half of a sheet of note-paper. I gave the poem away as an autograph, and now forget the lines. This was all trifling, the reader will say. No doubt Thackeray was always trifling, and yet always serious. In attempting to understand his character it is necessary for you to bear within your own mind the idea that he was always, within his own bosom, encountering melancholy with buffoonery, and meanness with satire. The very spirit of burlesque dwelt within him—a spirit which does not see the grand the less because of the travesties which it is always engendering.

In his youthful—all but boyish—days in London, he delighted to "put himself up" at the Bedford, in Covent Garden. Then, in his early married days, he lived in Albion Street, and from thence went to Great Coram Street, till his household there was broken up by his wife's illness. He afterwards took lodgings in St. James's Chambers, and then a house in Young Street, Kensington. Here he lived from 1847, when he was achieving his great triumph with *Vanity Fair*, down to 1853, when he removed to a house which he bought in Onslow Square. In Young Street there had come to lodge opposite to him an Irish gentleman, who, on the part of his injured country, felt very angry with Thackeray. *The Irish Sketch Book* had not been complimentary, nor were the descriptions which Thackeray had given generally of Irishmen; and there was extant an absurd idea that in his abominable heroine Catherine Hayes he had alluded to Miss Catherine Hayes, the Irish singer. Word was taken to Thackeray that this Irishman intended to come across the street and avenge his country on the calumniator's person. Thackeray immediately called upon the gentleman, and it was said that the visit was pleasant to both parties. There certainly was no blood shed.

He had now succeeded—in 1848—in making for himself a standing as a man of letters, and an income. What was the extent of his income I have no means of saying; nor is it a subject on which, as I think, inquiry should be made. But he was not satisfied with his position. He felt it to be precarious, and he was always thinking of what he owed to his two girls. That *arbitrium popularis auræ* on which he depended for his daily bread was not regarded

by him with the confidence which it deserved. He did not, probably, know how firm was the hold he had obtained of the public ear. At any rate he was anxious, and endeavoured to secure for himself a permanent income in the public service. He had become by this time acquainted, probably intimate, with the Marquis of Clanricarde, who was then Postmaster-General. In 1848 there fell a vacancy in the situation of Assistant-Secretary at the General Post-Office, and Lord Clanricarde either offered it to him or promised to give it to him. The Postmaster-General had the disposal of the place, but was not altogether free from control in the matter. When he made known his purpose at the Post-Office, he was met by an assurance from the officer next under him that the thing could not be done. The services were wanted of a man who had had experience in the Post-Office; and, moreover, it was necessary that the feelings of other gentlemen should be consulted. Men who have been serving in an office many years do not like to see even a man of genius put over their heads. In fact, the office would have been up in arms at such an injustice. Lord Clanricarde, who in a matter of patronage was not scrupulous, was still a good-natured man and amenable. He attempted to befriend his friend till he found that it was impossible, and then, with the best grace in the world, accepted the official nominee that was offered to him.

It may be said that had Thackeray succeeded in that attempt he would surely have ruined himself. No man can be fit for the management and performance of special work who has learned nothing of it before his thirty-seventh year; and no man could have been less so than Thackeray. There are men who, though they be not fit, are disposed to learn their lesson and make themselves as fit as possible. Such cannot be said to have been the case with this man. For the special duties which he would have to perform, consisting to a great extent of the maintenance of discipline over a large body of men, training is required, and the service would have suffered for awhile under any untried elderly tiro. Another man might have put himself into harness. Thackeray never would have done so. The details of his work after the first month would have been inexpressibly wearisome to him. To have gone into the city, and to have remained there every day from eleven till five would have been all but impossible to him. He would not have done it. And then he would have been tormented by the feeling that he was taking the pay and not doing the work. There is a belief current, not confided to a few, that a man may be a Government Secretary with a generous salary and have nothing to do. The idea is something that remains to us from the old days of sinecures. If there be now remaining places so pleasant, or gentlemen so happy, I do not know them. Thackeray's notion of his future duties was probably very vague. He would have repudiated the notion that he was looking for a sinecure, but no doubt considered that the duties would be easy and light. It is not too much to assert, that he who could drop his pearls as I have said above, throwing them wide cast without an effort, would have found his

work as Assistant-Secretary at the General Post-Office to be altogether too much for him. And then no doubt it was his intention to join literature with the Civil Service. He had been taught to regard Civil Service as easy, and had counted upon himself as able to add it to his novels, and his work with his *Punch* brethren, and to his contributions generally to the literature of the day. He might have done so, could he have risen at five, and have sat at his private desk for three hours before he began his official routine at the public one. A capability for grinding, an aptitude for continuous task work, a disposition to sit in one's chair as if fixed to it by cobbler's wax, will enable a man in the prime of life to go through the tedium of a second day's work every day; but of all men Thackeray was the last to bear the wearisome perseverance of such a life. Some more or less continuous attendance at his office he must have given, and with it would have gone *Punch* and the novels, the ballads, the burlesques, the essays, the lectures, and the monthly papers full of mingled satire and tenderness, which have left to us that Thackeray which we could ill afford to lose out of the literature of the nineteenth century. And there would have remained to the Civil Service the memory of a disgraceful job.

He did not, however, give up the idea of the Civil Service. In a letter to his American friend, Mr. Reed, dated 8th November, 1854, he says: "The secretaryship of our Legation at Washington was vacant the other day, and I instantly asked for it; but in the very kindest letter Lord Clarendon showed how the petition was impossible. First, the place was given away. Next, it would not be fair to appoint out of the service. But the first was an excellent reason—not a doubt of it." The validity of the second was probably not so apparent to him as it is to one who has himself waited long for promotion. "So if ever I come," he continues, "as I hope and trust to do this time next year, it must be in my own coat, and not the Queen's." Certainly in his own coat, and not in the Queen's, must Thackeray do anything by which he could mend his fortune or make his reputation. There never was a man less fit for the Queen's coat.

Nevertheless he held strong ideas that much was due by the Queen's ministers to men of letters, and no doubt had his feelings of slighted merit, because no part of the debt due was paid to him. In 1850 he wrote a letter to *The Morning Chronicle*, which has since been republished, in which he alludes to certain opinions which had been put forth in *The Examiner*. "I don't see," he says, "why men of letters should not very cheerfully coincide with Mr. Examiner in accepting all the honours, places, and prizes which they can get. The amount of such as will be awarded to them will not, we may be pretty sure, impoverish the country much; and if it is the custom of the State to reward by money, or titles of honour, or stars and garters of any sort, individuals who do the country service—and if individuals are gratified at having 'Sir' or 'My lord' appended to their names, or stars and ribbons hooked on to their coats and waistcoats, as men most undoubtedly are, and as

their wives, families, and relations are—there can be no reason why men of letters should not have the chance, as well as men of the robe or the sword; or why, if honour and money are good for one profession, they should not be good for another. No man in other callings thinks himself degraded by receiving a reward from his Government; nor, surely, need the literary man be more squeamish about pensions, and ribbons, and titles, than the ambassador, or general, or judge. Every European state but ours rewards its men of letters. The American Government gives them their full share of its small patronage; and if Americans, why not Englishmen?"

In this a great subject is discussed which would be too long for these pages; but I think that there now exists a feeling that literature can herself, for herself, produce a rank as effective as any that a Queen's minister can bestow. Surely it would be a repainting of the lily, an adding a flavour to the rose, a gilding of refined gold to create to-morrow a Lord Viscount Tennyson, a Baron Carlyle, or a Right Honourable Sir Robert Browning. And as for pay and pension, the less the better of it for any profession, unless so far as it may be payment made for work done. Then the higher the better, in literature as in all other trades. It may be doubted even whether a special rank of its own be good for literature, such as that which is achieved by the happy possessors of the forty chairs of the Academy in France. Even though they had an angel to make the choice—which they have not—that angel would do more harm to the excluded than good to the selected.

Pendennis, *Esmond*, and *The Newcomes* followed *Vanity Fair*—not very quickly indeed, always at an interval of two years—in 1850, 1852, and 1854. As I purpose to devote a separate short chapter, or part of a chapter, to each of these, I need say nothing here of their special merits or demerits. *Esmond* was brought out as a whole. The others appeared in numbers. "He lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." It is a mode of pronunciation in literature by no means very articulate, but easy of production and lucrative. But though easy it is seductive, and leads to idleness. An author by means of it can raise money and reputation on his book before he has written it, and when the pang of parturition is over in regard to one part, he feels himself entitled to a period of ease because the amount required for the next division will occupy him only half the month. This to Thackeray was so alluring that the entirety of the final half was not always given to the task. His self-reproaches and bemoanings when sometimes the day for reappearing would come terribly nigh, while yet the necessary amount of copy was far from being ready, were often very ludicrous and very sad—ludicrous because he never told of his distress without adding to it something of ridicule which was irresistible, and sad because those who loved him best were aware that physical suffering had already fallen upon him, and that he was deterred by illness from the exercise of continuous energy. I myself did not know him till after the time now in question. My

acquaintance with him was quite late in his life. But he has told me something of it, and I have heard from those who lived with him how continual were his sufferings. In 1854, he says in one of his letters to Mr. Reed—the only private letters of his which I know to have been published: "I am to-day just out of bed after another, about the dozenth, severe fit of spasms which I have had this year. My book would have been written but for them." His work was always going on, but though not fuller of matter—that would have been almost impossible—would have been better in manner had he been delayed neither by suffering nor by that palsying of the energies which suffering produces.

This ought to have been the happiest period of his life, and should have been very happy. He had become fairly easy in his circumstances. He had succeeded in his work, and had made for himself a great name. He was fond of popularity, and especially anxious to be loved by a small circle of friends. These good things he had thoroughly achieved. Immediately after the publication of *Vanity Fair* he stood high among the literary heroes of his country, and had endeared himself especially to a special knot of friends. His face and figure, his six feet four in height, with his flowing hair, already nearly gray, and his broken nose, his broad forehead and ample chest, encountered everywhere either love or respect; and his daughters to him were all the world—the bairns of whom he says, at the end of the *White Squall* ballad;

> 'I thought, as day was breaking,
> My little girls were waking,
> And smiling, and making
> A prayer at home for me."

Nothing could have been more tender or endearing than his relations with his children. But still there was a skeleton in his cupboard—or rather two skeletons. His home had been broken up by his wife's malady, and his own health was shattered. When he was writing *Pendennis*, in 1849, he had a severe fever, and then those spasms came, of which four or five years afterwards he wrote to Mr. Reed. His home, as a home should be, was never restored to him—or his health. Just at that period of life at which a man generally makes a happy exchange in taking his wife's drawing-room in lieu of the smoking-room of his club, and assumes those domestic ways of living which are becoming and pleasant for matured years, that drawing-room and those domestic ways were closed against him. The children were then no more than babies, as far as society was concerned—things to kiss and play with, and make a home happy if they could only have had their mother with them. I have no doubt there were those who thought that Thackeray was very jolly under his adversity. Jolly he was. It was the manner of the man to be so—if that continual playfulness which was natural to him, lying over a melancholy which was as continual, be compatible with jollity. He laughed, and ate, and drank, and threw his pearls about with miraculous profusion. But I fancy that he was far from happy. I remember once, when I was

young, receiving advice as to the manner in which I had better spend my evenings; I was told that I ought to go home, drink tea, and read good books. It was excellent advice, but I found that the reading of good books in solitude was not an occupation congenial to me. It was so, I take it, with Thackeray. He did not like his lonely drawing-room, and went back to his life among the clubs by no means with contentment.

In 1853, Thackeray having then his own two girls to provide for, added a third to his family, and adopted Amy Crowe, the daughter of an old friend, and sister of the well-known artist now among us. How it came to pass that she wanted a home, or that this special home suited her, it would be unnecessary here to tell even if I knew. But that he did give a home to this young lady, making her in all respects the same as another daughter, should be told of him. He was a man who liked to broaden his back for the support of others, and to make himself easy under such burdens In 1862, she married a Thackeray cousin, a young officer with the Victoria Cross, Edward Thackeray, and went out to India, where she died.

In 1854, the year in which *The Newcomes* came out, Thackeray had broken his close alliance with *Punch*. In December of that year there appeared from his pen an article in *The Quarterly* on *John Leech's Pictures of Life and Character*. It is a rambling discourse on picture-illustration in general, full of interest, but hardly good as a criticism—a portion of literary work for which he was not specially fitted. In it he tells us how Richard Doyle, the artist, had given up his work for *Punch*, not having been able, as a Roman Catholic, to endure the skits which, at that time, were appearing in one number after another against what was then called Papal aggression. The reviewer—Thackeray himself—then tells us of the secession of himself from the board of brethren. "Another member of Mr. Punch's cabinet, the biographer of *Jeames*, the author of *The Snob Papers*, resigned his functions, on account of Mr. Punch's assaults upon the present Emperor of the French nation, whose anger Jeames thought it was unpatriotic to arouse." How hard it must be for Cabinets to agree! This man or that is sure to have some pet conviction of his own, and the better the man the stronger the conviction! Then the reviewer went on in favour of the artist of whom he was specially speaking, making a comparison which must at the time have been odious enough to some of the brethren. "There can be no blinking the fact that in Mr. Punch's Cabinet John Leech is the right-hand man. Fancy a number of *Punch* without Leech's pictures! What would you give for it?" Then he breaks out into strong admiration of that one friend—perhaps with a little disregard as to the feelings of other friends.* This *Critical Review*, if it may properly be so

* For a week there existed at the *Punch* office a grudge against Thackeray in reference to this awkward question: "What would you give for your *Punch* without John Leech?" Then he asked the confraternity to dinner—*more Thackerayano*—and the confraternity came. Who can doubt but they were very jolly over the little blunder? For years afterwards Thackeray was a guest at the well-known *Punch* dinner, though he was no longer one of the contributors.

called—at any rate it is so named as now published—is to be found in our author's collected works, in the same volume with *Catherine.* It is there preceded by another, from *The Westminster Review*, written fourteen years earlier, on *The Genius of Cruikshank.* This contains a descriptive catalogue of Cruikshank's works up to that period, and is interesting, from the piquant style in which it is written. I fancy that these two are the only efforts of the kind which he made—and in both he dealt with the two great caricaturists of his time, he himself being, in the imaginative part of a caricaturist's work, equal in power to either of them.

We now come to a phase of Thackeray's life in which he achieved a remarkable success, attributable rather to his fame as a writer than to any particular excellence in the art which he then exercised. He took upon himself the functions of a lecturer, being moved to do so by a hope that he might thus provide a sum of money for the future sustenance of his children. No doubt he had been advised to this course, though I do not know from whom specially the advice may have come. Dickens had already considered the subject, but had not yet consented to read in public for money on his own account. John Forster, writing of the year 1846, says of Dickens and the then only thought-of exercise of a new profession: "I continued to oppose, for reasons to be stated in their place, that which he had set his heart upon too strongly to abandon, and which I still can wish he had preferred to surrender with all that seemed to be its enormous gain." And again he says, speaking of a proposition which had been made to Dickens from the town of Bradford: "At first this was entertained, but was abandoned, with some reluctance, upon the argument that to become publicly a reader must alter, without improving, his position publicly as a writer, and that it was a change to be justified only when the higher calling should have failed of the old success." The meaning of this was that the money to be made would be sweet, but that the descent to a profession which was considered to be lower than that of literature itself would carry with it something that was bitter. It was as though one who had sat on the Woolsack as Lord Chancellor should raise the question whether, for the sake of the income attached to it, he might, without disgrace, occupy a seat on a lower bench; as though an architect should consider with himself the propriety of making his fortune as a contractor; or the head of a college lower his dignity, while he increased his finances, by taking pupils. When such discussions arise, money generally carries the day—and should do so. When convinced that money may be earned without disgrace, we ought to allow money to carry the day. When we talk of sordid gain and filthy lucre, we are generally hypocrites. If gains be sordid and lucre filthy, where is the priest, the lawyer, the doctor, or the man of literature, who does not wish for dirty hands? An income, and the power of putting by something for old age, something for those who are to come after, is the wholesome and ac-

knowledged desire of all professional men. Thackeray having children, and being gifted with no power of making his money go very far, was anxious enough on the subject. We may say now, that had he confined himself to his pen, he would not have wanted while he lived, but would have left but little behind him. That he was anxious we have seen, by his attempts to subsidise his literary gains by a Government office. I cannot but think that had he undertaken public duties for which he was ill qualified, and received a salary which he could hardly have earned, he would have done less for his fame than by reading to the public. Whether he did that well or ill, he did it well enough for the money. The people who heard him, and who paid for their seats, were satisfied with their bargain—as they were also in the case of Dickens; and I venture to say that in becoming publicly a reader, neither did Dickens or Thackeray "alter his position as a writer," and "that it was a change to be justified," though the success of the old calling had in no degree waned. What Thackeray did enabled him to leave a comfortable income for his children, and one earned honestly, with the full approval of the world around him.

Having saturated his mind with the literature of Queen Anne's time—not probably, in the first instance, as a preparation for *Esmond*, but in such a way as to induce him to create an Esmond—he took the authors whom he knew so well as the subject for his first series of lectures. He wrote *The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* in 1851, while he must have been at work on *Esmond*, and first delivered the course at Willis's Rooms in that year. He afterwards went with these through many of our provincial towns, and then carried them to the United States, where he delivered them to large audiences in the winter of 1852 and 1853. Some few words as to the merits of the composition I will endeavour to say in another place. I myself never heard him lecture, and can therefore give no opinion of the performance. That which I have heard from others has been very various. It is, I think, certain that he had none of those wonderful gifts of elocution which made it a pleasure to listen to Dickens, whatever he read or whatever he said; nor had he that power of application by using which his rival taught himself with accuracy the exact effect to be given to every word. The rendering of a piece by Dickens was composed as an oratorio is composed, and was then studied. And the piece was all given by memory, without any looking at the notes or words. There was nothing of this with Thackeray. But the thing read was in itself of great interest to educated people. The words were given clearly, with sufficient intonation for easy understanding, so that they who were willing to hear something from him felt on hearing that they had received full value for their money. At any rate, the lectures were successful. The money was made—and was kept.

He came from his first trip to America to his new house in Onslow Square, and then published *The Newcomes*. This, too, was one of his great works, as to which I shall have to speak here.

after. Then, having enjoyed his success in the first attempt to lecture, he prepared a second series, He never essayed the kind of reading which with Dickens became so wonderfully popular. Dickens recited portions from his well-known works. Thackeray wrote his lectures expressly for the purpose. They have since been added to his other literature, but they were prepared as lectures. The second series were *The Four Georges.* In a lucrative point of view they were even more successful than the first, the sum of money realised in the United States having been considerable. In England they were less popular, even if better attended, the subject chosen having been distasteful to many. There arose the question whether too much freedom had not been taken with an office which, though it be no longer considered to be founded on divine right, is still as sacred as can be anything that is human. If there is to remain among us a sovereign, that sovereign, even though divested of political power, should be endowed with all that personal respect can give. If we wish ourselves to be high, we should treat that which is over us as high. And this should not depend altogether on personal character, though we know—as we have reason to know—how much may be added to the firmness of the feeling by personal merit. The respect of which we speak should, in the strongest degree, be a possession of the immediate occupant, and will naturally become dim —or perhaps be exaggerated—in regard to the past, as history or fable may tell of them. No one need hesitate to speak his mind of King John, let him be ever so strong a stickler for the privileges of majesty. But there are degrees of distance, and the throne of which we wish to preserve the dignity seems to be assailed when unmeasured evil is said of one who has sat there within our own memory. There would seem to each of us to be a personal affront were a departed relative delineated with all those faults by which we must own that even our near relatives have been made imperfect. It is a general conviction as to this which so frequently turns the biography of those recently dead into mere eulogy. The fictitious charity which is enjoined by the *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* banishes truth. The feeling of which I speak almost leads me at this moment to put down my pen. And, if so much be due to all subjects, is less due to a sovereign ?

Considerations such as these diminished, I think, the popularity of Thackeray's second series of lectures ; or, rather, not their popularity, but the estimation in which they were held. On this head he defended himself more than once very gallantly, and had a great deal to say on his side of the question. "Suppose, for example, in America—Philadelphia or in New York—that I had spoken about George IV. in terms of praise and affected reverence, do you believe they would have hailed his name with cheers, or have heard it with anything of respect?" And again: "We degrade our own honour and the sovereign's by unduly and unjustly praising him ; and the mere slaverer and flatterer is one who comes

forward, as it were, with flash notes, and pays with false coin his tribute to Cæsar. I don't disguise that I feel somehow on my trial here for loyalty—for honest English feeling." This was said by Thackeray at a dinner at Edinburgh, in 1857, and shows how the matter rested on his mind. Thackeray's loyalty was no doubt true enough, but was mixed with but little of reverence. He was one who revered modesty and innocence rather than power, against which he had in the bottom of his heart something of republican tendency. His leaning was no doubt of the more manly kind. But in what he said at Edinburgh he hardly hit the nail on the head. No one had suggested that he should have said good things of a king which he did not believe to be true. The question was whether it may not be well sometimes for us to hold our tongues. An American literary man, here in England, would not lecture on the morals of Hamilton, on the manners of General Jackson, on the general amenities of President Johnson.

In 1857 Thackeray stood for Oxford, in the Liberal interest, in opposition to Mr. Cardwell. He had been induced to do this by his old friend Charles Neate, who himself twice sat for Oxford, and died now not many months since. He polled 1,017 votes, against 1,070 by Mr. Cardwell; and was thus again saved by his good fortune from attempting to fill a situation in which he would not have shone. There are, no doubt, many to whom a seat in Parliament comes almost as the birthright of a well-born and well-to-do English gentleman. They go there with no more idea of shining than they do when they are elected to a first-class club—hardly with more idea of being useful. It is the thing to do, and the House of Commons is the place where a man ought to be—for a certain number of hours. Such men neither succeed nor fail, for nothing is expected of them. From such a one as Thackeray something would have been expected, which would not have been forthcoming. He was too desultory for regular work—full of thought, but too vague for practical questions. He could not have endured to sit for two or three hours at a time with his hat over his eyes, pretending to listen. as is the duty of a good legislator. He was a man intolerant of tedium, and in the best of his time impatient of slow work. Nor, though his liberal feelings were very strong, were his political convictions definite or accurate. He was a man who mentally drank in much, feeding his fancy hourly with what he saw, what he heard, what he read, and then pouring it all out with an immense power of amplification. But it would have been impossible for him to study and bring home to himself the various points of a complicated bill with a hundred and fifty clauses. In becoming a man of letters, and taking that branch of letters which fell to him, he obtained the special place that was fitted for him. He was a round peg in a round hole. There was no other hole which he would have fitted nearly so well. But he had his moment of political ambition, like others—and paid a thousand pounds for his attempt.

In 1857 the first number of *The Virginians* appeared; and the last—the twenty-fourth—in October, 1859. This novel, as all my readers are aware, is a continuance of *Esmond*, and will be spoken of in its proper place. He was then forty-eight years old, very gray, with much of age upon him, which had come from suffering—age shown by dislike of activity and by an old man's way of thinking about many things—speaking as though the world were all behind him instead of before; but still with a stalwart outward bearing, very erect in his gait, and a countenance peculiarly expressive and capable of much dignity. I speak of his personal appearance at this time, because it was then only that I became acquainted with him. In 1859 he undertook the last great work of his life, the editorship of *The Cornhill Magazine*, a periodical set on foot by Mr. George Smith, of the house of Smith and Elder, with an amount of energy greater than has generally been bestowed upon such enterprises. It will be well remembered still how much *The Cornhill* was talked about and thought of before it first appeared, and how much of that thinking and talking was due to the fact that Mr. Thackeray was to edit it. *Macmillan's*, I think, was the first of the shilling magazines, having preceded *The Cornhill* by a month, and it would ill become me, who have been a humble servant to each of them, to give to either any preference. But it must be acknowledged that a great deal was expected from *The Cornhill*, and I think it will be confessed that it was the general opinion that a great deal was given by it. Thackeray had become big enough to give a special *éclat* to any literary exploit to which he attached himself. Since the days of *The Constitutional* he had fought his way up the ladder, and knew how to take his stand there with an assurance of success. When it became known to the world of readers that a new magazine was to appear under Thackeray's editorship, the world of readers was quite sure that there would be a large sale. Of the first number over one hundred and ten thousand were sold, and of the second and third over one hundred thousand. It is in the nature of such things that the sale should fall off when the novelty is over. People believe that a new delight has come, a new joy for ever, and then find that the joy is not quite so perfect or enduring as they had expected. But the commencement of such enterprises may be taken as a measure of what will follow. The magazine, either by Thackeray's name or by its intrinsic merits—probably by both—achieved a great success. My acquaintance with him grew from my having been one of his staff from the first.

About two months before the opening day I wrote to him suggesting that he should accept from me a series of four short stories on which I was engaged. I got back a long letter in which he said nothing about my short stories, but asking whether I could go to work at once and let him have a long novel, so that it might begin with the first number. At the same time I heard from the publisher, who suggested some interesting little details as to honorarium The little details were very interesting, but absolutely no time was allowed to me. It was required that the first portion of my book

should be in the printer's hands within a month. Now it was my theory—and ever since this occurrence has been my practice—to see the end of my own work before the public should see the commencement.* If I did this thing I must not only abandon my theory, but instantly contrive a story, or begin to write it before it was contrived. That was what I did, urged by the interesting nature of the details. A novelist cannot always at the spur of the moment make his plot and create his characters who shall, with an arranged sequence of events, live with a certain degree of eventful decorum, through that portion of their lives which is to be portrayed. I hesitated, but allowed myself to be allured to what I felt to be wrong, much dreading the event. How seldom is it that theories stand the wear and tear of practice! I will not say that the story which came was good, but it was received with greater favor than any I had written before or have written since. I think that almost anything would have been then accepted coming under Thackeray's editorship.

I was astonished that work should be required in such haste, knowing that much preparation had been made, and that the service of almost any English novelist might have been obtained if asked for in due time. It was my readiness that was needed, rather than any other gift! The riddle was read to me after a time. Thackeray had himself intended to begin with one of his own great novels, but had put it off till it was too late. *Lovel the Widower* was commenced at the same time with my own story, but *Lovel the Widower* was not substantial enough to appear as the principal joint at the banquet. Though your guests will undoubtedly dine off the little delicacies you provide for them, there must be a heavy saddle of mutton among the viands prepared. I was the saddle of mutton, Thackeray having omitted to get his joint down to the fire in time enough. My fitness lay in my capacity for quick roasting.

It may be interesting to give a list of the contributors to the first number. My novel called *Framley Parsonage* came first. At this banquet the saddle of mutton was served before the delicacies. Then there was a paper by Sir John Bowring on *The Chinese and Outer Barbarians*. The commencing number of *Lovel the Widower* followed. George Lewes came next with his first chapters of *Studies in Animal Life*. Then there was Father Prout's *Inauguration Ode*, dedicated to the author of *Vanity Fair*—which should have led the way. I need hardly say that Father Prout was the Rev. F. Mahony. Then followed *Our Volunteers*, by Sir John Burgoyne; *A Man of Letters of the Last Generation*, by Thornton Hunt; *The Search for Sir John Franklin*, from a private journal of an officer of the Fox, now Sir Allen Young; and *The first Morning of* 1860, by Mrs. Archer Clive. The number was concluded by the first of those *Roundabout Papers* by Thackeray himself,

* I had begun an Irish story and half finished it, which would reach just the required length. Would that do? I asked. I was civilly told that my Irish story would no doubt be charming, but was not quite the thing that was wanted. Could I not begin a new one —English—and if possible about clergymen? The details were so interesting that had a couple of archbishops been demanded, I should have produced them.

which became so delightful a portion of the literature of *The Cornhill Magazine.*

It would be out of my power, and hardly interesting, to give an entire list of those who wrote for *The Cornhill* under Thackeray's editorial direction. But I may name a few, to show how strong was the support which he received. Those who contributed to the first number I have named. Among those who followed were Alfred Tennyson, Jacob.Omnium, Lord Houghton, William Russell, Mrs. Beecher Stowe, Mrs. Browning, Robert Bell, George Augustus Sala, Mrs. Gaskell, James Hinton, Mary Howitt, John Kaye, Charles Lever, Frederick Locker, Laurence Oliphant, John Ruskin, Fitzjames Stephen, T. A. Trollope, Henry Thompson, Herman Merivale, Adelaide Proctor, Matthew Arnold, the present Lord Lytton, and Miss Thackeray, now Mrs. Ritchie. Thackeray continued the editorship for two years and four months, namely, up to April, 1862; but, as all readers will remember, he continued to write for it till he died, the day before Christmas Day, in 1863. His last contribution was, I think, a paper written for and published in the November number, called "*Strange to say on Club Paper*," in which he vindicated Lord Clyde from the accusation of having taken the club stationery home with him. It was not a great subject, for no one could or did believe that the Field-Marshal had been guilty of any meanness; but the handling of it has made it interesting, and his indignation has made it beautiful.

The magazine was a great success, but justice compels me to say that Thackeray was not a good editor. As he would have been an indifferent civil servant, an indifferent member of Parliament, so was he perfunctory as an editor. It has sometimes been thought well to select a popular literary man as an editor; first, because his name will attract, and then with an idea that he who can write well himself will be a competent judge of the writings of others. The first may sell a magazine, but will hardly make it good; and the second will not avail much, unless the editor so situated be patient enough to read what is sent to him. Of a magazine editor it is required that he should be patient, scrupulous, judicious, but above all things hard-hearted. I think it may be doubted whether Thackeray did bring himself to read the basketfuls of manuscripts with which he was deluged, but he probably did, sooner or later, read the touching little private notes by which they were accompanied —the heartrending appeals, in which he was told that if this or the other little article could be accepted and paid for, a starving family might be saved from starvation for a month. He tells us how he felt on receiving such letters in one of his *Roundabout Papers*, which he calls "*Thorns in the cushion.*" "How am I to know," he says—"though to be sure I begin to know now—as I take the letters off the tray, which of those envelopes contains a real *bona fide* letter, and which a thorn? One of the best invitations this year I mistook for a thorn letter, and kept it without opening." Then he gives the sample of a thorn letter. It is from a governess with a poem, and with a prayer for insertion and payment. "We

have known better days, sir. I have a sick and widowed mother to maintain, and little brothers and sisters who look to me." He could not stand this, and the money would be sent, out of his own pocket, though the poem might be—postponed, till happily it should be lost.

From such material a good editor could not be made. Nor, in truth, do I think that he did much of the editorial work. I had once made an arrangement, not with Thackeray, but with the proprietors, as to some little story. The story was sent back to me by Thackeray—rejected. *Virginibus puerisque!* That was the gist of his objection. There was a project in a gentleman's mind —as told in my story—to run away with a married woman! Thackeray's letter was very kind, very regretful—full of apology for such treatment to such a contributor. But—*Virginibus puerisque!* I was quite sure that Thackeray had not taken the trouble to read the story himself. Some moral deputy had read it, and disapproving no doubt properly, of the little project to which I have alluded, had incited the editor to use his authority. That Thackeray had suffered when he wrote it was easy to see, fearing that he was giving pain to one he would fain have pleased. I wrote him a long letter in return, as full of drollery as I knew how to make it. In four or five days there came a reply in the same spirit—boiling over with fun. He had kept my letter by him, not daring to open it—as he says that he did with that eligible invitation. At last he had given it to one of his girls to examine—to see whether the thorn would be too sharp, whether I had turned upon him with reproaches. A man so susceptible, so prone to work by fits and starts, so unmethodical, could not have been a good editor.

In 1862 he went into the new house which he had built for himself at Palace Green. I remember well, while this was still being built, how his friends used to discuss his imprudence in building it. Though he had done well with himself, and had made and was making a large income, was he entitled to live in a house the rent of which could not be counted at less than from five hundred to six hundred pounds a year? Before he had been there two years, he solved the question by dying—when the house was sold for two thousand pounds more than it had cost. He himself, in speaking of his project, was wont to declare that he was laying out his money in the best way he could for the interest of his children; and it turned out that he was right.

In 1863 he died in the house which he had built, and at the period of his death was writing a new novel in numbers, called *Denis Duval*. In *The Cornhill*, *The Adventures of Philip* had appeared. This new enterprise was destined for commencement on 1st January, 1864, and, though the writer was gone, it kept its promise, as far as it went. Three numbers, and what might probably have been intended for half of a fourth, appeared. It may be seen, therefore, that he by no means held to my theory, that the author should see the end of his work before the public sees the commencement. But neither did Dickens or Mrs. Gaskell, both of

whom died with stories not completed, which, when they died, were in the course of publication. All the evidence goes against the necessity of such precaution. Nevertheless, were I giving advice to a tiro in novel writing, I should recommend it.

With the last chapter of *Denis Duval* was published in the magazine a set of notes on the book, taken for the most part from Thackeray's own papers, and showing how much collateral work he had given to the fabrication of his novel. No doubt in preparing other tales, especially *Esmond*, a very large amount of such collateral labour was found necessary. He was a man who did very much of such work, delighting to deal in little historical incidents. They will be found in almost everything that he did, and I do not know that he was ever accused of gross mistakes. But I doubt whether on that account he should be called a laborious man. He could go down to Winchelsea, when writing about the little town, to see in which way the streets lay, and to provide himself with what we call local colouring. He could jot down the suggestions, as they came to his mind, of his future story. There was an irregularity in such work which was to his taste. His very notes would be delightful to read, partaking of the nature of pearls when prepared only for his own use. But he could not bring himself to sit at his desk and do an allotted task day after day. He accomplished what must be considered as quite a sufficient life's work. He had about twenty-five years for the purpose, and that which he has left is an ample produce for the time. Nevertheless he was a man of fits and starts, who, not having been in his early years drilled to method, never achieved it in his career,

He died on the day before Christmas Day, as has been said above, very suddenly, in his bed, early in the morning, in the fifty-third year of his life. To those who saw him about in the world there seemed to be no reason why he should not continue his career for the next twenty years. But those who knew him were so well aware of his constant sufferings, that, though they expected no sudden catastrophe, they were hardly surprised when it came. His death was probably caused by those spasms of which he had complained ten years before, in his letter to Mr. Reed. On the last day but one of the year, a crowd of sorrowing friends stood over his grave as he was laid to rest in Kensal Green: and, as quickly afterwards as it could be executed, a bust to his memory was put up in Westminster Abbey. It is a fine work of art, by Marochetti; but, as a likeness, is, I think, less effective than that which was modelled, and then given to the Garrick Club, by Durham, and has lately been put into marble, and now stands in the upper vestibule of the club. Neither of them, in my opinion, gives so accurate an idea of the man as a statuette in bronze, by Boehm, of which two or three copies were made. One of them is in my possession. It has been alleged, in reference to this, that there is something of a caricature in the lengthiness of the figure, in the two hands thrust into the trousers pockets, and in the protrusion of the chin. But this feeling has originated in the general idea that any face, or any

figure, not made by the artist more beautiful or more graceful than the original is an injustice. The face must be smoother, the pose of the body must be more dignified, the proportions more perfect, than in the person represented, or satisfaction is not felt. Mr. Boehm has certainly not flattered, but, as far as my eye can judge, he has given the figure of the man exactly as he used to stand before us. I have a portrait of him in crayon, by Samuel Lawrence, as like, but hardly as natural.

A little before his death Thackeray told me that he had then succeeded in replacing the fortune which he had lost as a young man. He had, in fact, done better, for he left an income of seven hundred and fifty pounds behind him.

It has been said of Thackeray that he was a cynic. This has been said so generally, that the charge against him has become proverbial. This, stated barely, leaves one or two impressions on the mind, or perhaps the two together—that this cynicism was natural to his character and came out in his life, or that it is the characteristic of his writings. Of the nature of his writings generally, I will speak in the last chapter of this little book. As to his personal character as a cynic, I must find room to quote the following first stanzas of the little poem which appeared to his memory in *Punch*, from the pen of Shirley Brooks:

He was a cynic! By his life all wrought
  Of generous acts, mild words, and gentle ways,
His heart wide open to all kindly thought,
  His hand so quick to give, his tongue to praise!

He was a cynic! You might read it writ
  In that broad brow, crowned with its silver hair;
In those blue eyes, with childlike candour lit,
  In that sweet smile his lips were wont to wear!

He was a cynic! By the love that clung
  About him from his children, friends, and kin;
By the sharp pain light pen and gossip tongue
  Wrought in him, chafing the soft heart within!

The spirit and nature of the man have been caught here with absolute truth. A public man should of course be judged from his public work. If he wrote as a cynic—a point which I will not discuss here—it may be fair that he who is to be known as a writer should be so called. But, as a man, I protest that it would be hard to find an individual farther removed from the character. Over and outside his fancy, which was the gift which made him so remarkable—a certain feminine softness was the most remarkable trait about him. To give some immediate pleasure was the great delight of his life—a sovereign to a schoolboy, gloves to a girl, a dinner to a man, a compliment to a woman. His charity was overflowing. His generosity excessive. I heard once a story of woe from a man who was the dear friend of both of us. The gentleman wanted a large

sum of money instantly—something under two thousand pounds—had no natural friends who could provide it, but must go utterly to the wall without it. Pondering over this sad condition of things just revealed to me, I met Thackeray between the two mounted heroes at the Horse Guards, and told him the story. "Do you mean to say that I am to find two thousand pounds?" he said, angrily, with some expletives. I explained that I had not even suggested the doing of anything—only that we might discuss the matter. Then there came over his face a peculiar smile, and a wink in his eye, and he whispered his suggestion, as though half ashamed of his meanness. "I'll go half," he said, "if anybody will do the rest." And he did go half, at a day or two's notice, though the gentleman was no more than simply a friend. I am glad to be able to add that the money was quickly repaid. I could tell various stories of the same kind, only that I lack space, and that they, if simply added one to the other, would lack interest.

He was no cynic, but he was a satirist; and could now and then be a satirist in conversation, hitting very hard when he did hit. When he was in America, he met at dinner a literary gentleman of high character, middle-aged, and most dignified deportment. The gentleman was one whose character and acquirements stood very high—deservedly so—but who in society, had that air of wrapping his toga around him, which adds, or is supposed to add, many cubits to a man's height. But he had a broken nose. At dinner he talked much of the tender passion, and did so in a manner which stirred up Thackeray's feeling of the ridiculous. "What has the world come to," said Thackeray, out loud to the table, "when two broken-nosed old fogies like you and me sit talking about love to each other!" The gentleman was astounded, and could only sit wrapping his toga in silent dismay for the rest of the evening. Thackeray then, as at other similar times, had no idea of giving pain, but when he saw a foible he put his foot upon it, and tried to stamp it out.

Such is my idea of the man whom many call a cynic, but whom I regard as one of the most soft-hearted of human beings, sweet as Charity itself, who went about the world dropping pearls, doing good, and never wilfully inflicting a wound.

CHAPTER II.

FRASER'S MAGAZINE AND PUNCH.

How Thackeray commenced his connection with *Fraser's Magazine* I am unable to say. We know how he had come to London with a view to a literary career, and that he had at one time made an attempt to earn his bread as a correspondent to a newspaper from Paris. It is probable that he became acquainted with the redoubtable Oliver Yorke, otherwise Dr. Maginn, or some of his staff, through the connection which he had thus opened with the press. He was not known, or at any rate he was unrecognised, by *Fraser* in January, 1835, in which month an amusing catalogue was given of the writers then employed, with portraits of them all seated at a symposium. I can trace no article to his pen before November, 1837, when the *Yellowplush Correspondence* was commenced, though it is hardly probable that he should have commenced with a work of so much pretension. There had been published a volume called *My Book, or the Anatomy of Conduct* by John Skelton, and a very absurd book no doubt it was. We may presume that it contained maxims on etiquette, and that it was intended to convey in print those invaluable lessons on deportment which, as Dickens has told us, were subsequently given by Mr. Turveydrop, in the academy kept by him for that purpose. Thackeray took this as his foundation for the *Fashionable Fax and Polite Annygoats*, by Jeames Yellowplush, with which he commenced those repeated attacks against snobbism which he delighted to make through a considerable portion of his literary life. Oliver Yorke has himself added four or five pages of his own to Thackeray's lucubrations; and with the second, and some future numbers, there appeared illustrations by Thackeray himself, illustrations at this time not having been common with the magazine. From all this I gather that the author was already held in estimation by *Fraser's* confraternity. I remember well my own delight with *Yellowplush* at the time, and how I inquired who was the author. It was then that I first heard Thackeray's name.

The *Yellowplush Papers* were continued through nine numbers. No further reference was made to Mr. Skelton and his book beyond that given at the beginning of the first number, and the satire is only shown by the attempt made by Yellowplush, the footman, to give his ideas generally on the manners of noble life. The idea seems to be that a gentleman may, in heart and in action, be as vul-

gar as a footman. No doubt he may, but the chances are very much that he won't. But the virtue of the memoir does not consist in the lessons, but in the general drollery of the letters. The "orthogwaphy is inaccuwate," as a certain person says in the memoirs—"so inaccuwate" as to take a positive study to "cowpwehend" it; but the joke, though old, is so handled as to be very amusing. Thackeray soon rushes away from his criticisms on snobbism to other matters. There are the details of a card-sharping enterprise, in which we cannot but feel that we recognise something of the author's own experiences in the misfortunes of Mr. Dawkins; there is the Earl of Crab's, and then the first of those attacks which he was tempted to make on the absurdities of his brethren of letters, and the only one which now has the appearance of having been ill-natured. His first victims were Dr. Dionysius Lardner and Mr. Edward Bulwer Lytton, as he was then. We can surrender the doctor to the whip of the satirist; and for "Sawedwadgeorgeearllittnbulwig," as the novelist is made to call himself, we can well believe that he must himself have enjoyed the *Yellowplush Memoirs* if he ever reread them in after-life. The speech in which he is made to dissuade the footman from joining the world of letters is so good that I will venture to insert it: "Bullwig was violently affected; a tear stood in his glistening i. 'Yellowplush,' says he, seizing my hand, 'you *are* right. Quit not your present occupation; black boots, clean knives, wear plush all your life, but don't turn literary man. Look at me. I am the first novelist in Europe. I have ranged with eagle wings over the wide regions of literature, and perched on every eminence in its turn. I have gazed with eagle eyes on the sun of philosophy, and fathomed the mysterious depths of the human mind. All languages are familiar to me, all thoughts are known to me, all men understood by me. I have gathered wisdom from the honeyed lips of Plato, as we wandered in the gardens of the academies; wisdom, too, from the mouth of Job Johnson, as we smoked our backy in Seven Dials. Such must be the studies, and such is the mission, in this world of the Poet-Philosopher. But the knowledge is only emptiness; the initiation is but misery; the initiated a man shunned and banned by his fellows. Oh!' said Bullwig, clasping his hands, and throwing his fine i's up to the chandelier, 'the curse of Pwomethus descends upon his wace. Wath and punishment pursue them from genewation to genewation! Wo to genius, the heaven-scaler, the fire-stealer! Wo and thrice-bitter desolation! Earth is the wock on which Zeus, wemorseless, stwetches his withing wictim;—men, the vultures that feed and fatten on him. Ai, ai! it is agony eternal—gwoaning and solitawy despair! And you, Yellowplush, would penetwate these mystewies: you would waise the awful veil, and stand in the twemendous Pwesence. Beware, as you value your peace, beware! Withdwaw, wash Neophyte! For heaven's sake! O for heaven's sake!'—Here he looked round with agony;—'give me a glass of bwandy-and-water, for this clawet is beginning to disagwee with me.'" It was thus that Thackeray

began that vein of satire on his contemporaries of which it may be said that the older he grew the more amusing it was, and at the same time less likely to hurt the feelings of the author satirised.

The next tale of any length from Thackeray's pen, in the magazine, was that called *Catherine*, which is the story taken from the life of a wretched woman called Catherine Hayes. It is certainly not pleasant reading, and was not written with a pleasant purpose. It assumes to have come from the pen of Ikey Solomon, of Horsemonger Lane, and its object is to show how disgusting would be the records of thieves, cheats, and murderess, if their doings and language were described according to their nature. instead of being handled in such a way as to create sympathy, and therefore imitation. Bulwer's *Eugene Aram*, Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard*, and Dickens' Nancy were in his mind, and it was thus that he preached his sermon against the selection of such heroes and hero ines bythe novelists of the day. "Be it granted," he says, in his epilogue "Solomon is dull; but don't attack his morality. He humbly submits that, in his poem, no man shall mistake virtue for vice, no, man shall allow a single sentiment of pity or admiration to enter his bosom for any character in the poem, it being from beginning to end a scene of unmixed rascality, performed by persons who never deviate into good feeling." The intention is intelligible enough, but such a story neither could have been written nor read—certainly not written by Thackeray, nor read by the ordinary reader of a first-class magazine—had he not been enabled to adorn it by infinite wit. Captain Brock, though a brave man, is certainly not described as an interesting or gallant soldier; but he is possessed of great resources. Captain Macshane, too, is a thorough blackguard: but he is one with a dash of loyalty about him, so that the reader can almost sympathise with him, and is tempted to say that Ikey Solomon has not quite kept his promise.

Catherine appeared in 1839 and 1840. In the latter of those years *The Shabby Genteel* story also came out. Then. in 1841, there followed *The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond*, illustrated by Samuel's cousin, Michael Angelo. But though so announced in *Fraser*, there were no illustrations, and those attached to the story in later editions are not taken from sketches by Thackeray. This, as far as I know, was the first use of the name Titmarsh, and seems to indicate some intention on the part of the author of creating a hoax as to two personages—one the writer and the other the illustrator. If it were so, he must soon have dropped the idea. In the last paragraph he has shaken off his cousin Michael. The main object of the story is to expose the villany of bubble companies, and the danger they run who venture to have dealings with city matters which they do not understand. I cannot but think that he altered his mind and changed his purpose while he was writing it, actuated probably by that editorial monition as to its length.

In 1842 were commenced *The Confessions of George Fitz-Boodle*, which were continued into 1843. I do not think that they

attracted much attention, or that they have become peculiarly popular since. They are supposed to contain the reminiscences of a younger son, who moans over his poverty, complains of womankind generally, laughs at the world all round, and intersperses his pages with one or two excellent ballads. I quote one, written for the sake of affording a parody, with the parody along with it, because the two together give so strong an example of the condition of Thackeray's mind in regard to literary products. The "humbug" of everything, the pretence, the falseness of affected sentiment, the remoteness of poetical pathos from the true condition of the average minds of men and women, struck him so strongly, that he sometimes allowed himself almost to feel—or at any rate, to say—that poetical expression, as being above nature, must be unnatural. He had declared to himself that all humbug was odious, and should be by him laughed down to the extent of his capacity. His Yellowplush, his Catherine Hayes, his Fitz-Boodle, his Barry Lyndon, and Becky Sharp, with many others of this kind, were all invented and treated for this purpose and after this fashion. I shall have to say more on the same subject when I come to *The Snob Papers*. In this instance he wrote a very pretty ballad, *The Willow Tree*—so good that if left by itself it would create no idea of absurdity or extravagant pathos in the mind of the ordinary reader—simply that he might render his own work absurd by his own parody.

THE WILLOW-TREE.

No. I.

Know ye the willow-tree,
  Whose gray leaves quiver,
Whispering gloomily
  To yon pale river?
Lady, at eventide
  Wander not near it!
They say its branches hide
  A sad lost spirit!

Once to the willow-tree
  A maid came fearful,
Pale seemed her cheek to be,
  Her blue eye tearful.
Soon as she saw the tree,
  Her steps moved fleeter,
No one was there—ah me!—
  No one to meet her!

Quick beat her heart to hear
  The far bells' chime
Toll from the chapel tower
  The trysting-time.

THE WILLOW-TREE.

No II.

Long by the willow-tree
  Vainly they sought her,
Wild rang the mother's screams
  O'er the gray water.
"Where is my lovely one?
  Where is my daughter?

Rouse thee, sir constable—
  Rouse thee and look.
Fisherman, bring your net,
  Boatman, yoor hook.
Beat in the lily-beds,
  Dive in the brook."

Vainly the constable
  Shouted and called her.
Vainly the fisherman
  Beat the green alder.
Vainly he threw the net.
  Never it hauled her!

Mother beside the fire
  Sat, her night-cap in;

But the red sun went down
In golden flame,
And though she looked around,
Yet no one came!

Presently came the night,
Sadly to greet her—
Moon in her silver light,
Stars in their glitter.
Then sank the moon away
Under the billow.
Still wept the maid alone—
There by the willow!

Through the long darkness,
By the stream rolling,
Hour after hour went on
Tolling and tolling.
Long was the darkness,
Lonely and stilly.
Shrill came the night wind,
Piercing and chilly.

Shrill blew the morning breeze,
Biting and cold.
Bleak peers the gray dawn
Over the wold!
Bleak over moor and stream
Looks the gray dawn,
Gray with dishevelled hair.
Still stands the willow there—
The maid is gone!

Domine, Domine!
Sing we a litany—
Sing for poor maiden hearts
broken and weary;
Sing we a litany,
Wail we and weep we a
wild miserere!

Father in easy-chair,
Gloomily napping;
When at the window-sill
Came a light tapping.

And a pale countenance
Looked through the casement
Loud beat the mother's heart.
Sick with amazement,
And at the vision which
Came to surprise her!
Shrieking in an agony—
"Lor'! it's Elizar!"

Yes, 'twas Elizabeth;—
Yes, 'twas their girl:
Pale was her cheek, and her
hair out of curl.
"Mother!" the loved one,
Blushing exclaimed,
"Let not your innocent
Lizzy be blamed.

Yesterday, going to Aunt
Jones's to tea,
Mother, dear mother, I
Forgot the door-key!
And as the night was cold,
And the way steep,
Mrs. Jones kept me to
Breakfast and sleep."

Whether her pa and ma
Fully believed her,
That we shall never know.
Stern they received her;
And for the work of that
Cruel, though short, night—
Sent her to bed without
Tea for a fortnight.

MORAL.

Hey diddle diddlety,
Cat and the fiddlety,
Maidens of England take
caution by she!
Let love and suicide
Never tempt you aside,
And always remember to take
the door-key!

Mr. George Fitz-Boodle gave his name to other narratives beyond his own *Confessions*. A series of stories was carried on by him in *Fraser* called, *Men's Wives*, containing three: *Ravenwing*,

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Berry and *Dennis Hoggarty's Wife.* The first chapter in *Mr. and Mrs. Frank Berry* describes "The Fight at Slaughter House." Slaughter House, as Mr. Venables reminded us in the last chapter, was near Smithfield, in London—the school which afterwards became Grey Friars; and the fight between Biggs and Berry is the record of one which took place in the flesh when Thackeray was at the Charter House. But Mr. Fitz-Boodle's name was afterwards attached to a greater work than these, to a work so great that subsequent editors have thought him to be unworthy of the honour. In the January number, 1844, of *Fraser's Magazine* are commenced the *Memoirs of Barry Lyndon*, and the authorship is attributed to Mr. Fitz-Boodle. The title given in the magazine was *The Luck of Barry Lyndon: a Romance of the last Century.* By Fitz-Boodle. In the collected edition of Thackeray's works the *Memoirs* are given as "Written by himself," and were, I presume, so brought out by Thackeray, after they had appeared in *Fraser.* Why Mr. George Fitz-Boodle should have been robbed of so great an honour I do not know.

In imagination, language, construction, and general literary capacity, Thackeray never did anything more remarkable than *Barry Lyndon.* I have quoted the words which he put into the mouth of Ikey Solomon, declaring that in the story which he has there told he has created nothing but disgust for the wicked characters he has produced, and that he has "used his humble endeavours to cause the public also to hate them." Here, in *Barry Lyndon*, he has, probably unconsciously, acted in direct opposition to his own principles. Barry Lyndon is as great a scoundrel as the mind of man ever conceived. He is one who might have taken as his motto Satan's words: "Evil, be thou my good." And yet his story is so written that it is almost impossible not to entertain something of a friendly feeling for him. He tells his own adventures as a card-sharper, bully, and liar; as a heartless wretch, who had neither love nor gratitude in his composition; who had no sense even of loyalty; who regarded gambling as the highest occupation to which a man could devote himself, and fraud as always justified by success; a man possessed by all meannesses except cowardice. And the reader is so carried away by his frankness and energy as almost to rejoice when he succeeds, and to grieve with him when he is brought to the ground.

The man is perfectly satisfied as to the reasonableness—I might almost say, as to the rectitude—of his own conduct throughout. He is one of a decayed Irish family, that could boast of good blood. His father had obtained possession of the remnants of the property by turning Protestant, thus ousting the elder brother, who later on becomes his nephew's confederate in gambling. The elder brother is true to the old religion, and as the law stood in the last century, the younger brother, by changing his religion, was able to turn him out. Barry, when a boy, learns the slang and the gait of the debauched gentlemen of the day. He is specially proud of being a gentleman by birth and manners. He had been kidnapped, and made to serve as a common soldier, but boasts that he

was at once fit for the occasion when enabled to show as a court gentleman. "I came to it at once," he says, "and as if I had never done anything else all my life. I had a gentleman to wait upon me, a French *friseur* to dress my hair of a morning. I knew the taste of chocolate as by intuition almost, and could distinguish between the right Spanish and the French before I had been a week in my new position. I had rings on all my fingers and watches in both my fobs—canes, trinkets, and snuff-boxes of all sorts. I had the finest natural taste for lace and china of any man I ever knew."

To dress well, to wear a sword with a grace, to carry away his plunder with affected indifference, and to appear to be equally easy when he loses his last ducat, to be agreeable to women, and to look like a gentleman—these are his accomplishments. In one place he rises to the height of a grand professor in the art of gambling, and gives his lessons with almost a noble air. "Play grandly, honorably. Be not, of course, cast down at losing; but above all, be not eager at winning, as mean souls are." And he boasts of his accomplishments with so much eloquence as to make the reader sure that he believes in them. He is quite pathetic over himself, and can describe with heartrending words the evils that befall him when others use against him successfully any of the arts which he practises himself.

The marvel of the book is not so much that the hero should evidently think well of himself, as that the author should so tell his story as to appear to be altogether on the hero's side. In *Catherine*, the horrors described are most truly disgusting—so much that the story, though very clever, is not pleasant reading. The *Memoirs of Barry Lyndon* are very pleasant to read. There is nothing to shock or disgust. The style of narrative is exactly that which might be used as to the exploits of a man whom the author intended to represent as deserving of sympathy and praise—so that the reader is almost brought to sympathise. But I should be doing an injustice to Thackeray if I were to leave an impression that he had taught lessons tending to evil practice, such as he supposed to have been left by *Jack Sheppard* or *Eugene Aram*. No one will be tempted to undertake the life of a *chevalier d'industrie* by reading the book, or be made to think that cheating at cards is either an agreeable or a profitable profession. The following is excellent as a tirade in favour of gambling, coming from Redmond de Balibari, as he came to be called during his adventures abroad, but it will hardly persuade anyone to be a gambler:

"We always played on parole with anybody—any person, that is, of honor and noble lineage. We never pressed for our winnings, or declined to receive promissory notes in lieu of gold. But woe to the man that did not pay when the note became due! Redmond de Balibari was sure to wait upon him with his bill, and I promise you there were very few bad debts. On the contrary, gentlemen were grateful to us for our forbearance, and our character for honour stood unimpeached. In latter times, a vulgar national prejudice has chosen to cast a slur upon the character of men of honour

engaged in the profession of play; but I speak of the good old days of Europe, before the cowardice of the French aristocracy (in the shameful revolution, which served them right) brought discredit upon our order. They cry fie now upon men engaged in play; but I should like to know how much more honourable *their* modes of livelihood are than ours. The broker of the Exchange, who bulls and bears, and buys and sells, and dabbles with lying loans, and trades upon state-secrets—what is he but a gamester? The merchant who deals in teas and tallow, is he any better? His bales of dirty indigo are his dice, his cards come up every year instead of every ten minutes, and the sea is his green-table. You call the profession of the law an honourable one, where a man will lie for any bidder—lie down poverty for the sake of a fee from wealth; lie down right because wrong is in his brief. You call a doctor an honorable man—a swindling quack who does not believe in the nostrums which he prescribes, and takes your guinea for whispering in your ear that it is a fine morning. And yet, forsooth, a gallant man, who sits him down before the baize and challenges all comers, his money against theirs, his fortune against theirs, is proscribed by your modern moral world! It is a conspiracy of the middle-class against gentlemen. It is only the shopkeeper cant which is to go down nowadays. I say that play was an institution of chivalry. It has been wrecked along with other privileges of men of birth. When Seingalt engaged a man for six-and-thirty hours without leaving the table, do you think he showed no courage? How have we had the best blood, and the brightest eyes too, of Europe throbbing round the table, as I and my uncle have held the cards and the bank against some terrible player, who was matching some thousands out of his millions against our all, which was there on the baize! When we engaged that daring Alexis Kossloffsky, and won seven thousand louis on a single coup, had we lost we should have been beggars the next day; when *he* lost, he was only a village and a few hundred serfs in pawn the worse. When at Toeplitz the Duke of Courland brought fourteen lacqueys, each with foar bags of florins, and challenged our bank to play against the sealed bags, what did we ask? 'Sir,' said we, 'we' have but eighty thousand florins in bank, or two hundred thousand at three months. If your highness's bags do not contain more than eighty thousand we will meet you.' And we did; and after eleven hours' play in which our bank was at one time reduced to two hundred and three ducats, we won seventeen thousand florins of him. Is *this* not something like boldness? Does this profession not require skill, and perseverance, and bravery? Four crowned heads looked on at the game, and an imperial princess, when I turned up the ace of hearts and made Paroli, burst into tears. No man on the European Continent held a higher position than Redmond Barry then; and when the Duke of Courland lost, he was pleased to say that we had won nobly. And so we had, and spent nobly what we won." This is very grand, and is put as an eloquent man would put it who really wished to defend gambling.

The rascal, of course, comes to a miserable end, but the tone of the narrative is continued throughout. He is brought to live at last with his old mother in the Fleet prison, on a wretched annuity of fifty pounds per annum, which she has saved out of the general wreck, and there he dies of delirium tremens. For an assumed tone of continued irony, maintained through the long memoir of a life, never becoming tedious, never unnatural, astounding us rather by its naturalness, I know nothing equal to *Barry Lyndon.*

As one reads, one sometimes is struck by a conviction that this or the other writer has thoroughly liked the work on which he is engaged. There is a gusto about his passages, a liveliness in the language, a spring in the motion of the words, an eagerness of description, a lilt, if I may so call it, in the progress of the narrative, which makes the reader feel that the author has himself greatly enjoyed what he has written. He has evidently gone on with his work without any sense of weariness or doubt; and the words have come readily to him. So it has been with *Barry Lyndon.* "My mind was filled full with those blackguards," Thackeray once said to a friend. It is easy enough to see that it was so. In the passage which I have above quoted, his mind was running over with the idea that a rascal might be so far gone in rascality as to be in love with his own trade.

This was the last of Thackeray's long stories in *Fraser.* I have given by no means a complete catalogue of his contributions to the magazine, but I have perhaps mentioned those which are best known. There were many short pieces which have now been collected in his works, such as *Little Travels and Roadside Sketches*, and the *Carmen Lilliense*, in which the poet is supposed to be detained at Lille by want of money. There are others which I think are not to be found in the collected works, such as a *Box of Novels by Titmarsh*, and *Titmarsh in the Picture Galleries.* After the name of Titmarsh had been once assumed it was generally used in the papers which he sent to *Fraser.*

Thackeray's connection with *Punch* began in 1843, and, as far as I can learn, *Miss Tickletoby's Lectures on English History* was his first contribution. They, however, have not been found worthy of a place in the collected edition. His short pieces during a long period of his life were so numerous that to have brought them all together would have weighted his more important works with two great an amount of extraneous matter. The same lady, Miss Tickletoby, gave a series of lectures. There was *The History of the next French Revolution*, and *The Wanderings of our Fat Contributor*—the first of which is, and the latter is not, perpetuated in his works. Our old friend Jeames Yellowplush, or De la Pluche—for we cannot for a moment doubt that he is the same Jeames—is very prolific, and as excellent in his orthography, his sense, and satire, as ever. These papers began with *The Lucky Speculator.* He lives in The Albany; he hires a brougham; and is devoted to Miss Emily Flimsey, the daughter of Sir George, who had been his master—to the great injury of poor Maryanne,

the fellow-servant who had loved him in his kitchen days. Then there follows that wonderful ballad, *Jeames of Backley Square.* Upon this he writes an angry letter to *Punch*, dated from his chambers in The Albany: "Has a regular suscriber to your amusing paper, I beg leaf to state that I should never have done so had I supposed that it was your 'abbit to igspose the mistaries of privit life, and to hinger the delligit feelings of umble individyouls like myself." He writes in his own defence, both as to Maryanne and to the share-dealing by which he had made his fortune; and he ends with declaring his right to the position which he holds. "You are correct in stating that I am of hancient Normin fam'ly. This is more than Peal can say, to whomb I applied for a barnetcy; but the primmier being of low igstraction, natrally stikles for his horder." And the letter is signed "Fitzjames De la Pluche." Then follows his diary, beginning with a description of the way in which he rushed into *Punch's* office, declaring his misfortunes, when losses had come upon him. "I wish to be paid for my contribewtions to your paper. Suckmstances is altered with me." Whereupon he gets a cheque upon Messrs. Pump and Aldgate, and has himself carried away to new speculations. He leaves his diary behind him, and *Punch* surreptitiously publishes it. There is much in the diary which comes from Thackeray's very heart. Who does not remember his indignation against Lord Bareacres? "I gave the old humbug a few shares out of my own pocket. 'There, old Pride,' says I, 'I like to see you down on your knees to a footman. There, old Pomposity! Take fifty pounds. I like to see you come cringing and begging for it!' Whenever I see him in a very public place, I take my change for my money. I digg him in the ribs, or clap his padded old shoulders. I call him 'Bareacres, my old brick,' and I see him wince. It does my 'art good." It does Thackeray's heart good to pour himself out in indignation against some imaginary Bareacres. He blows off his steam with such an eagerness that he forgets for a time, or nearly forgets, his cacography. Then there are "Jeames on Time Bargings," "Jeames on the Guage Question," "Mr. Jeames again." Of all our author's heroes Jeames is perhaps the most amusing. There is not much in that joke of bad spelling, and we should have been inclined to say beforehand, that Mrs. Malaprop had done it so well and so sufficiently, that no repetition of it would be received with great favour. Like other dishes, it depends upon the cooking. Jeames, with his "suckmstances," high or low, will be immortal.

There were *The Travels in London*, a long series of them; and then *Punches Prize Novelists*, in which Thackeray imitates the language and plots of Bulwer, Disraeli, Charles Lever, G. P. R. James, Mrs. Gore, and Cooper, the American. They are all excellent; perhaps Codlingsby is the best. Mendoza, when he is fighting with the bargeman, or drinking with Codlingsby, or receiving Louis Philippe in his rooms, seems to have come direct from the pen of our Premier. Phil Fogerty's jump, and the younger and the elder

horsemen, as they come riding into the story, one in his armour and the other with his feathers, have the very savour and tone of Lever and James; but then the savour and the tone are not so piquant. I know nothing in the way of imitation to equal Codlingsby, if it be not The Tale of Drury Lane, by W. S. in the *Rejected Addresses*, of which it is said that Walter Scott declared that he must have written it himself. The scene between Dr. Franklin, Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and Tatua, the chief of the Nose-rings, as told in *The Stars and Stripes*, is perfect in its way, but it fails as being a caricature of Cooper. The Caricaturist has been carried away beyond and above his model, by his own sense of fun.

Of the ballads which appeared in *Punch* I will speak elsewhere, as I must give a separate short chapter to our author's power of versification; but I must say a word of *The Snob Papers*, which were at the time the most popular and the best known of all Thackeray's contributions to *Punch*. I think that perhaps they were more charming, more piquant, more apparently true, when they came out one after another in the periodical, than they are now as collected together. I think that one at a time would be better than many. And I think that the first half in the long list of snobs would have been more manifestly snobs to us than they are now with the second half of the list appended. In fact, there are too many of them, till the reader is driven to tell himself that the meaning of it all is that Adam's family is from first to last a family of snobs. "First," says Thackeray, in preface, "the world was made; then as a matter of course, snobs; they existed for years and years, and were no more known than America. But presently—ingens patebat tellus—the people became darkly aware that there was such a race. Not above five-and-twenty years since, a name, an expressive monosyllable, arose to designate that case. That name has spread over England like railroads subsequently; snobs are known and recognised throughout an empire on which I am given to understand the sun never sets. *Punch* appears at the right season to chronicle their history; and the individual comes forth to write that history in *Punch*.

"I have—and for this gift I congratulate myself with a deep and abiding thankfulness—an eye for a snob. If the truthful is the beautiful, it is beautiful to study even the snobbish—to track snobs through history as certain little dogs in Hampshire hunt out truffles; to sink shafts in society, and come upon rich veins of snob-ore. Snobbishness is like Death, in a quotation from Horace, which I hope you never heard, 'beating with equal foot at poor men's doors, and kicking at the gates of emperors.' It is a great mistake to judge of snobs lightly, and think they exist among the lower classes merely. An immense percentage of snobs, I believe, is to be found in every rank of this mortal life. You must not judge hastily or vulgarly of snobs; to do so shows that you are yourself a snob. I myself have been taken for one."

The state of Thackeray's mind when he commenced his delinea-

tions of snobbery is here accurately depicted. Written, as these papers were, for *Punch*, and written, as they were, by Thackeray, it was a necessity that every idea put forth should be given as a joke, and that the satire on society in general should be wrapped up in burlesque absurdity. But not the less eager and serious was his intention. When he tells us, at the end of the first chapter, of a certain Colonel Snobley, whom he met at "Bagnigge Wells," as he says, and with whom he was so disgusted that he determined to drive the man out of the house, we are well aware that he had met an offensive military gentleman—probably at Tunbridge. Gentlemen thus offensive, even though tamely offensive, were peculiarly offensive to him. We presume, by what follows, that this gentleman, ignorantly—for himself most unfortunately—spoke of Pubicōla. Thackeray was disgusted—disgusted that such a name should be lugged into ordinary conversation at all, and then that a man should talk about a name with which he was so little acquainted as not to know how to pronounce it. The man was therefore a snob, and ought to be put down; in all which I think that Thackeray was unnecessarily hard on the man, and gave him too much importance.

So it was with him in his whole intercourse with snobs—as he calls them. He saw something that was distasteful, and a man instantly became a snob in his estimation. "But you *can* draw," a man once said to him, there having been some discussion on the subject of Thackeray's art powers. The man meant no doubt to be civil, but meant also to imply that for the purpose needed the drawing was good enough—a matter on which he was competent to form an opinion. Thackeray instantly put the man down as a snob for flattering him. The little courtesies of the world and the little discourtesies became snobbish to him. A man could not wear his hat, or carry his umbrella, or mount his horse, without falling into some error of snobbism before his hypercritical eyes. St. Michael would have carried his armour amiss, and St. Cecilia have been snobbish as she twanged her harp.

I fancy that a policeman considers that every man in the street would be properly "run in," if only all the truth about the man had been known. The tinker thinks that every pot is unsound. The cobbler doubts the stability of every shoe. So at last it grew to be the case with Thackeray. There was more hope that the city should be saved because of its ten just men, than for society, if society were to depend on ten who were not snobs. All this arose from the keenness of his vision into that which was really mean. But that keenness became so aggravated by the intenseness of his search that the slightest speck of dust became to his eyes as a foul stain. Publicōla, as we saw, damned one poor man to a wretched immortality, and another was called pitilessly over the coals because he had mixed a grain of flattery with a bushel of of truth. Thackeray tells us that he was born to hunt out snobs, as certain dogs are trained to find truffles. But we can imagine that a dog, very energetic at producing truffles, and not finding them as plentiful as his heart desired, might occasionally produce

roots which were not genuine—might be carried on in his energies till to his senses every fungus-root became a truffle. I think that there has been something of this with our author's snob-hunting, and that his zeal was at last greater than his discrimination.

The nature of the task which came upon him made this fault almost unavoidable. When a hit is made, say with a piece at a theatre, or with a set of illustrations, or with a series of papers on this or the other subject—when something of this kind has suited the taste of the moment, and gratified the public, there is a natural inclination on the part of those who are interested to continue that which has been found to be good. It pays and it pleases, and it seems to suit everybody. Then it is continued usque ad nauseam, We see it in everything. When the king said he liked partridges, partridges were served to him every day. The world was pleased with certain ridiculous portraits of its big men. The big men were soon used up, and the little men had to be added.

We can imagine that even *Punch* may occasionally be at a loss for subjects wherewith to delight its readers. In fact, *The Snob Papers* were too good to be brought to an end, and therefore there were forty-five of them. A dozen would have been better. As he himself says in his last paper, "for a mortal year we have been together flattering and abusing the human race." It was exactly that. Of course we know—everybody always knows—that a bad specimen of his order may be found in every division of society. There may be a snob king, a snob parson, a snob member of parliament, a snob grocer, tailor, goldsmith, and the like. But that is not what has been meant. We did not want a special satirist to tell us what we all knew before. Had snobbishness been divided for us into its various attributes and characteristics, rather than attributed to various classes, the end sought—the exposure, namely, of the evil—would have been better attained. The snobbishness of flattery, of falsehood, of cowardice, lying, time-serving, money-worship, would have been perhaps attacked to a better purpose than that of kings, priests, soldiers, merchants, or men of letters. The assault as made by Thackeray seems to have been made on the profession generally.

The paper on clerical snobs is intended to be essentially generous, and is ended by an allusion to certain old clerical friends which has a sweet tone of tenderness in it. "How should he who knows you, not respect you or your calling? May this pen never write a pennyworth again if it ever casts ridicule upon either." But in the mean time he has thrown his stone at the covetousness of bishops, because of certain Irish prelates who died rich many years before he wrote. The insinuation is that bishops generally take more of the loaves and fishes than they ought, whereas the fact is that bishops' incomes are generally so insufficient for the requirements demanded of them, that a feeling prevails that a clergyman to be fit for a bishopric should have a private income. He attacks the snobbishness of the universities, showing us how one class of young men consists of fellow-commoners, who wear

lace and drink wine with their meals, and another class consists of sizars, or servitors, who wear badges, as being poor, and are never allowed to take their food with their fellow-students. That arrangements fit for past times are not fit for these is true enough. Consequently, they should gradually be changed, and from day to day are changed. But there is no snobbishness in this. Was the fellow-commoner a snob when he acted in accordance with the custom of his rank and standing? or the sizar who accepted aid in achieving that education which he could not have got without it? or the tutor of the college, who carried out the rules entrusted to him? There are two military snobs, Rag and Famish. One is a swindler, and the other a debauched young idiot. No doubt they are both snobs, and one has been, while the other is, an officer. But there is, I think, not an unfairness so much as an absence of intuition, in attaching to soldiers especially two vices to which all classes are open. Rag was a gambling snob, and Famish a drunken snob; but they were not specially military snobs. There is a chapter devoted to dinner-giving snobs, in which I think the doctrine laid down will not hold water, and therefore that the snobbism imputed is not proved. "Your usual style of meal," says the satirist—"that is plenteous, comfortable, and in its perfection—should be that to which you welcome your friends." Then there is something said about the "Brummagem plate pomp," and we are told that it is right that dukes should give grand dinners, but that we—of the middle class—should entertain our friends with the simplicity which is customary with us. In all this there is, I think, a mistake. The duke gives a grand dinner because he thinks his friends will like it; sitting down when alone with the duchess, we may suppose, with a retinue and grandeur less than that which is arrayed for gala occasions. So is it with Mr. Jones, who is no snob because he provides a costly dinner—if he can afford it. He does it because he thinks his friends will like it. It may be that the grand dinner is a bore—and that the leg of mutton, with plenty of gravy and potatoes all hot, would be nicer. I generally prefer the leg of mutton myself. But I do not think that snobbery is involved in the other. A man, no doubt, may be a snob in giving a dinner. I am not a snob because for the occasion I eke out my own dozen silver forks with plated ware; but if I make believe that my plated ware is true silver, then I am a snob.

In that matter of association with our betters—we will for the moment presume that gentlemen and ladies with titles or great wealth are our betters—great and delicate questions arise as to what is snobbery and what is not, in speaking of which Thackeray becomes very indignant, and explains the intensity of his feelings as thoroughly by a charming little picture as by his words. It is a picture of Queen Elizabeth as she is about to trample with disdain on the coat which that snob Raleigh is throwing for her use on the mud before her. This is intended to typify the low parasite nature of the Englishman which has been described in the previous page or

two. "And of these calm moralists '—it matters not for our present purpose who were the moralists in question—" is there one, I wonder, whose heart would not throb with pleasure if he could be seen walking arm-in-arm with a couple of dukes down Pall Mall? No; it is impossible, in our condition of society, not to be sometimes a snob." And again:—" How should it be otherwise in a country where lordolatry is part of our creed, and where our children are brought up to respect the 'Peerage' as the Englishman's second Bible?" Then follows the wonderfully graphic picture of Queen Elizabeth and Raleigh.

In all this Thackeray has been carried away from the truth by his hatred for a certain meanness of which there are no doubt examples enough. As for Raleigh, I think we have always sympathised with the young man, instead of despising him, because he felt on the impulse of the moment that nothing was too good for the woman and the queen combined. The idea of getting something in return for his coat could hardly have come so quick to him as that impulse in favour of royalty and womanhood. If one of us to-day should see the queen passing, would he not raise his hat, and assume, unconsciously, something of an altered demeanour because of his reverence for majesty? In doing so he would have no mean desire of getting anything. The throne and its occupant are to him honourable, and he honours them. There is surely no greater mistake than to suppose that reverence is snobbishness. I meet a great man in the street, and some chance having brought me to his knowledge, he stops and says a word to me. Am I a snob because I feel myself to be graced by his notice? Surely not. And if his acquaintance goes further and he asks me to dinner, am I not entitled so far to think well of myself because I have been found worthy of his society?

They who have raised themselves in the world, and they, too, whose position has enabled them to receive all that estimation can give, all that society can furnish, all that intercourse with the great can give, are more likely to be pleasant companions than they who have been less fortunate. That picture of two companion dukes in Pall Mall is too gorgeous for human eye to endure. A man would be scorched to cinders by so much light, as he would be crushed by a sack of sovereigns even though he might be allowed to have them if he could carry them away. But there can be no doubt that a peer taken at random as a companion would be preferable to a clerk from a counting-house—taken at random. The clerk might turn out a scholar on your hands, and the peer no better than a poor spendthrift; but the chances are the other way.

A tuft-hunter is a snob, a parasite is a snob, the man who allows the manhood within him to be awed by a coronet is a snob. The man who worships mere wealth is a snob. But so also is he who, in fear lest he should be called a snob, is afraid to seek the acquaintance—or if it come to speak of the acquaintance—of those whose acquaintance is manifestly desirable. In all this I feel that

Thackeray was carried beyond the truth by his intense desire to put down what is mean.

It is in truth well for us all to know what constitutes snobbism, and I think that Thackeray, had he not been driven to dilution and dilatation, could have told us. If you will keep your hands from picking and stealing, and your tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering, you will not be a snob. The lesson seems to be simple, and perhaps a little trite, but if you look into it, it will be found to contain nearly all that is necessary.

But the excellence of each individual picture as it is drawn is not the less striking because there may be found some fault with the series as a whole. What can excel the telling of the story of Captain Shindy at his club—which is, I must own, as true as it is graphic? Captain Shindy is a real snob. "'Look at it, sir; is it cooked? Smell it, sir. Is it meat fit for a gentleman?' he roars out to the steward, who stands trembling before him, and who in vain tells him that the Bishop of Bullooksmithy has just had three from the same loin." The telling as regards Captain Shindy is excellent, but the sidelong attack upon the episcopate is cruel. "All the waiters in the club are huddled round the captain's mutton-chop. He roars out the most horrible curses at John for not bringing the pickles. He utters the most dreadful oaths because Thomas has not arrived with the Harvey sauce. Peter comes tumbling with the water-jug over Jeames, who is bringing the 'glittering canisters with bread.'

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"Poor Mrs. Shindy and the children are, meanwhile, in dingy lodgings somewhere, waited upon by a charity girl in pattens."

The visit to Castle Carabas, and the housekeeper's description of the wonders of the family mansion, is as good. "'The Side Entrance and 'All,' says the housekeeper. 'The halligator hover the mantelpiece was brought home by Hadmiral St. Michaels, when a capting with Lord Hanson. The harms on the cheers is the harms of the Carabas family. The great 'all is seventy feet in lenth, fifty-six in breath, and thirty-eight feet 'igh. The carvings of the chimlies, representing the buth or Venus and 'Ercules and 'Eyelash, is by Van Chislum, the most famous sculpture of his hage and country. The ceiling, by Calimanco, represents Painting, Harchitecture, and Music—the naked female figure with the barrel-organ—introducing George, first Lord Carabas, to the Temple of the Muses. The winder ornaments is by Vanderputty. The floor is Patagonian marble; and the chandelier in the centre was presented to Lionel, second marquis, by Lewy the Sixteenth, whose 'ead was cut hoff in the French Revolution. We now henter the South Gallery," etc., etc. All of which is very good fun, with a dash of truth in it also as to the snobbery—only in this it will be necessary to be quite sure where the snobbery lies. If my Lord Carabas has a "buth of Venus," beautiful for all eyes to see, there is no snobbery, only good-nature, in the showing it; nor is there snobbery in going to see it, if a beautiful "buth of Venus" has

charms for you. If you merely want to see the inside of a lord's house, and the lord is puffed up with the pride of showing his, then there will be two snobs.

Of all those papers it may be said that each has that quality of a pearl about it which in the previous chapter I endeavoured to explain. In each some little point is made in excellent language, so as to charm by its neatness, incision, and drollery. But *The Snob Papers* had better be read separately, and not taken in the lump.

Thackeray ceased to write for *Punch* in 1852, either entirely or almost so.

CHAPTER III.

VANITY FAIR.

SOMETHING has been said, in the biographical chapter, of the way in which *Vanity Fair* was produced, and of the period in the author's life in which it was written. He had become famous—to a limited extent—by the exquisite nature of his contributions to periodicals; but he desired to do something larger, something greater, something, perhaps, less ephemeral. For though *Barry Lyndon* and others have not proved to be ephemeral, it was thus that he regarded them. In this spirit he went to work and wrote *Vanity Fair.*

It may be as well to speak first of the faults which were attributed to it. It was said that the good people were all fools, and that the clever people were all knaves. When the critics—the talking critics as well as the writing critics—began to discuss *Vanity Fair*, there had already grown up a feeling as to Thackeray as an author—that he was one who had taken up the business of castigating the vices of the world. Scott had dealt with the heroics, whether displayed in his Flora MacIvors or Meg Merilieses, in his Ivanhoes or Ochiltrees. Miss Edgeworth had been moral; Miss Austen conventional; Bulwer had been poetical and sentimental; Marryatt and Lever had been funny and pugnacious, always with a dash of gallantry, displaying funny naval and funny military life; and Dickens had already become great in painting the virtues of the lower orders. But by all these some kind of virtue had been sung, though it might be only the virtue of riding a horse or fighting a duel. Even Eugene Aram and Jack Sheppard, with whom Thackeray found so much fault, were intended to be fine fellows, though they broke into houses and committed murders. The primary object of all those writers was to create an interest by exciting sympathy. To enhance our sympathy personages were introduced who were very vile indeed—as Bucklaw, in the guise of a lover, to heighten our feelings for Ravenswood and Lucy; as Wild, as a thief-taker, to make us more anxious for the saving of Jack; as Ralph Nickleby, to pile up the pity for his niece Kate. But each of these novelists might have appropriately begun with an *Arma virumque cano.* The song was to be of something godlike—even with a Peter Simple. With Thackeray it had been altogether different. Alas, alas! the meanness of human wishes; the poorness of human results! That had been his tone. There can be no

doubt that the heroic had appeared contemptible to him, as being untrue. The girl who had deceived her papa and mamma seemed more probable to him than she who perished under the willow-tree from sheer love—as given in the last chapter. Why sing songs that are false? Why tell of Lucy Ashtons and Kate Nicklebys, when pretty girls, let them be ever so beautiful, can be silly and sly? Why pour philosophy out of the mouth of a fashionable young gentleman like Pelham, seeing that young gentlemen of that sort rarely, or we may say never, talk after that fashion? Why make a house-breaker a gallant charming young fellow, the truth being that house-breakers as a rule are as objectionable in their manners as they are in their morals? Thackeray's mind had in truth worked in this way, and he had become a satirist. That had been all very well for *Fraser* and *Punch;* but when his satire was continued through a long novel, in twenty-four parts, readers—who do in truth like the heroic better than the wicked—began to declare that this writer was no novelist, but only a cynic.

Thence the question arises what a novel should be—which I will endeavour to discuss very shortly in a later chapter. But this special fault was certainly found with *Vanity Fair* at the time. Heroines should not only be beautiful, but should be endowed also with a quasi celestial grace—grace of dignity, propriety, and reticence. A heroine should hardly want to be married, the arrangement being almost too mundane—and, should she be brought to consent to undergo such bond, because of its acknowledged utility, it should be at some period so distant as hardly to present itself to the mind as a reality. Eating and drinking should be altogether indifferent to her, and her clothes should be picturesque rather than smart, and that from accident rather than design. Thackeray's Amelia does not at all come up to the description here given. She is proud of having a lover, constantly declaring to herself and to others that he is "the greatest and the best of men"—whereas the young gentleman is, in truth, a very little man. She is not at all indifferent as to her finery, nor, as we see incidentally, to enjoying her suppers at Vauxhall. She is anxious to be married—and as soon as possible. A hero, too, should be dignified and of a noble presence; a man who, though he may be as poor as Nicholas Nickleby, should nevertheless be beautiful on all occasions, and never deficient in readiness, address, or self-assertion. *Vanity Fair* is specially declared by the author to be "a novel without a hero," and therefore we have hardly a right to complain of deficiency of heroic conduct in any of the male characters. But Captain Dobbin does become the hero, and is deficient. Why was he called Dobbin, except to make him ridiculous? Why is he so shamefully ugly, so shy, so awkward? Why was he the son of a grocer? Thackeray in so depicting him was determined to run counter to the recognised taste of novel readers. And then again there was the feeling of another great fault. Let there be the virtuous in a novel and let there be the vicious, the dignified and the undignified, the sublime and the ridiculous—only let the virtuous,

the dignified, and the sublime be in the ascendant. Edith Bellenden, and Lord Evandale, and Morton himself would be too stilted, were they not enlivened by Mause, and Cuddie, and Pound-text. But here, in this novel, the vicious and the absurd have been made to be of more importance than the good and the noble. Becky Sharp and Rawdon Crawley are the real heroine and hero of the story. It is with them that the reader is called upon to interest himself. It is of them that he will think when he is reading the book. It is by them that he will judge the book when he has read it. There was no doubt a feeling with the public that though satire may be very well in its place, it should not be made the backbone of a work so long and so important at this. A short story such as *Catherine* or *Barry Lyndon* might be pronounced to have been called for by the iniquities of an outside world; but this seemed to the readers to have been addressed almost to themselves. Now men and women like to be painted as Titian would paint them, or Raffaelle—not as Rembrandt, or even Rubens.

Whether the ideal or the real is the best form of a novel may be questioned, but there can be no doubt that as there are novelists who cannot descend from the bright heaven of the imagination to walk with their feet upon the earth, so there are others to whom it is not given to soar among clouds. The reader must please himself, and make his selection if he cannot enjoy both. There are many who are carried into a heaven of pathos by the woes of a Master of Ravenswood, who fail altogether to be touched by the enduring constancy of a Dobbin. There are others—and I will not say but they may enjoy the keenest delight which literature can give—who cannot employ their minds on fiction unless it be conveyed in poetry. With Thackeray it was essential that the representations made by him should be, to his own thinking, life-like. A Dobbin seemed to him to be such a one as might probably be met with in the world, whereas to his thinking a Ravenswood was simply a creature of the imagination. He should have said of such, as we would say of female faces by Raffaelle, that women would like to be like them, but are not like them. Men might like to be like Ravenswood, and women may dream of men so formed and constituted, but such men do not exist. Dobbins do, and therefore Thackeray chose to write of a Dobbin.

So also of the preference given to Becky Sharp and to Rawdon Crawley. Thackeray thought that more can be done by exposing the vices than extolling the virtues of mankind. No doubt he had a more thorough belief in the one than in the other. The Dobbins he did encounter—seldom; the Rawdon Crawleys very often. He saw around him so much that was mean! He was hurt so often by the little vanities of people! It was thus that he was driven to that overthoughtfulness about snobs of which I have spoken in the last chapter. It thus became natural to him to insist on the thing which he hated with unceasing assiduity, and only to break out now and again into a rapture of love for the true nobility which was dear to him—as he did with the character of Captain Dobbin.

It must be added to all this, that, before he has done with his snob or his knave, he will generally weave in some little trait of humanity by which the sinner shall be relieved from the absolute darkness of utter iniquity. He deals with no Varneys or Deputy-Shepherds, all villany and all lies, because the snobs and knaves he had seen had never been all snob or all knave. Even Shindy probably had some feeling for the poor woman he left at home. Rawdon Crawley loved his wicked wife dearly, and there were moments even with her in which some redeeming trait half reconciles her to the reader.

Such were the faults which were found in *Vanity Fair;* but though the faults were found freely, the book was read by all. Those who are old enough can well remember the effect which it had, and the welcome which was given to the different numbers as they appeared. Though the story is vague and wandering, clearly commenced without any idea of an ending, yet there is something in the telling which makes every portion of it perfect in itself. There are absurdities in it which would not be admitted to anyone who had not a peculiar gift of making even his absurdities delightful. No school-girl who ever lived would have thrown back her gift-book, as Rebecca did the "dixonary," out of the carriage window as she was taken away from School. But who does not love that scene with which the novel commences? How could such a girl as Amelia Osborne have got herself into such society as that in which we see her at Vauxhall? But we forgive it all because of the telling. And then there is that crowning absurdity of Sir Pitt Crawley and his establishment.

I never could understand how Thackeray in his first serious attempt could have dared to subject himself and Sir Pitt Crawley to the critics of the time. Sir Pitt is a baronet, a man of large property, and in Parliament, to whom Becky Sharp goes as a governess at the end of a delightful visit with her friend Amelia Sedley, on leaving Miss Pinkerton's school. The Sedley carriage takes her to Sir Pitt's door. "When the bell was rung a head appeared between the interstices of the dining-room shutters, and the door was opened by a man in drab breeches and gaiters, with a dirty old coat, a foul old neckcloth lashed round his bristly neck, a shining bald head, a leering red face, a pair of twinkling gray eyes, and a mouth perpetually on the grin.

"'This Sir Pitt Crawley's?' says John from the box.

"'E'es,' says the man at the door, with a nod.

"'Hand down these 'ere trunks there,' said John.

"'Hand 'em down yourself,' said the porter."

But John on the box declines to do this, as he cannot leave his horses.

"The bald-headed man, taking his hands out of his breeches' pockets, advanced on this summons, and throwing Miss Sharp's trunk over his shoulder, carried it into the house." Then Becky is shown into the house, and a dismantled dining-room is described nto which she is led by the dirty man with the trunk

Two kitchen chairs, and a round table, and an attenuated old poker and tongs, were, however, gathered round the fireplace, as was a saucepan over a feeble, sputtering fire. There was a bit of cheese and bread and a tin candlestick on the table, and a little black porter in a pint pot.

"Had your dinner, I suppose?" This was said by him of the bald head. "It is not too warm for you? Like a drop of beer?"

"Where is Sir Pitt Crawley?" said Miss Sharp, majestically.

"He, he! I'm Sir Pitt Crawley. Rek'lect you owe me a pint for bringing down your luggage. He, he! ask Tinker if I ain't.

The lady addressed as Mrs. Tinker at this moment made her appearance, with a pipe and a paper of tobacco, for which she had been despatched a minute before Miss Sharp's arrival; and she handed the articles over to Sir Pitt, who had taken his seat by the fire.

"Where's the farden?" said he. "I gave you three half-pence; where's the change, old Tinker?"

"There," replied Mrs. Tinker, flinging down the coin. "It's only baronets as cares about farthings."

Sir Pitt Crawley has always been to me a stretch of audacity which I have been unable to understand. But it has been accepted; and from this commencement of Sir Pitt Crawley have grown the wonderful characters of the Crawley family—old Miss Crawley, the worldly, wicked, pleasure-loving aunt; the Rev. Bute Crawley and his wife, who are quite as worldly; the sanctimonious elder son, who in truth is not less so; and Rawdon, who ultimately becomes Becky's husband—who is the bad hero of the book, as Dobbin is the good hero. They are admirable; but it is quite clear that Thackeray had known nothing of what was coming about them when he caused Sir Pitt to eat his tripe with Mrs. Tinker in the London dining-room.

There is a double story running through the book, the parts of which are but lightly woven together, of which the former tells us the life and adventures of that singular young woman, Becky Sharp; and the other the troubles and ultimate success of our noble hero, Captain Dobbin. Though it be true that readers prefer, or pretend to prefer, the romantic to the common in their novels, and complain of pages which are defiled with that which is low, yet I find that the absurd, the ludicrous, and even the evil, leave more impression behind them than the grand, the beautiful, or even the good. Dominie Sampson, Dugald Dalgetty, and Bothwell are, I think, more remembered than Fergus MacIvor, than Ivanhoe himself, or Mr. Butler the minister. It certainly came to pass that, in spite of the critics, Becky Sharp became the first attraction in *Vanity Fair*. When we speak now of *Vanity Fair*, it is always to Becky that our thoughts recur. She has made a position for herself in the world of fiction, and is one of our established personages.

I have already said how she left school, throwing the "dixonary" out of the window, like dust from her feet, and was taken to spend a few halcyon weeks with her friend Amelia Sedley, at the Sedley mansion in Russell Square. There she meets a brother Sedley home from India—the immortal Jos—at whom she began to set her hitherto untried cap. Here we become acquainted both

with the Sedley and the Osborne families, with all their domestic affections and domestic snobbery, and have to confess that the snobbery is stronger than the affection. As we desire to love Amelia Sedley, we wish that the people around her were less vulgar or less selfish—especially we wish it in regard to that handsome young fellow, George Osborne, whom she loves with her whole heart. But with Jos Sedley we are inclined to be content, though he be fat, purse-proud, awkward, a drunkard, and a coward, because we do not want anything better for Becky. Becky does not want anything better for herself, because the man has money. She has been born a pauper. She knows herself to be but ill qualified to set up as a beauty—though by dint of cleverness she does succeed in that afterwards. She has no advantages in regard to friends or family as she enters life. She must earn her bread for herself. Young as she is, she loves money, and has a great idea of the power of money. Therefore, though Jos is distasteful at all points, she instantly makes her attack. She fails, however, at any rate for the present. She never becomes his wife, but at last she succeeds in getting some of his money. But before that time comes she has many a suffering to endure, and many a triumph to enjoy.

She goes to Sir Pitt Crawley as governess for his second family, and is taken down to Queen's Crawley in the country. There her cleverness prevails, even with the baronet, of whom I have just given Thackeray's portrait. She keeps his accounts, and writes his letters, and helps him to save money; she reads with the elder sister books they ought not to have read; she flatters the sanctimonious son. In point of fact, she becomes all in all at Queen's Crawley, so that Sir Philip himself falls in love with her—for there is reason to think that Sir Pitt may soon become again a widower. But there also came down to the baronet's house, on an occasion of general entertaining, Captain Rawdon Crawley. Of course Becky sets her cap at him, and of course succeeds. She always succeeds. Though she is only the governess, he insists upon dancing with her, to the neglect of all the young ladies of the neighbourhood. They continue to walk together by moonlight—or starlight—the great, heavy, stupid, half-tipsy dragoon, and the intriguing, covetous, altogether unprincipled young woman. And the two young people absolutely come to love one another in their way—the heavy, stupid, fuddled dragoon, and the false, covetous, altogether unprincipled young woman.

The fat aunt Crawley is a maiden lady, very rich, and Becky quite succeeds in gaining the rich aunt by her wiles. The aunt becomes so fond of Becky down in the country, that when she has to return to her own house in town, sick from over-eating, she cannot be happy without taking Becky with her. So Becky is installed in the house in London, having been taken away abruptly from her pupils, to the great dismay of the old lady's long-established resident companion. They all fall in love with her; she makes herself so charming, she is so clever; she can even, by help

of a little care in dressing, become so picturesque! As all this goes on, the reader feels what a great personage is Miss Rebecca Sharp.

Lady Crawley dies down in the country, while Becky is still staying with her sister, who will not part with her. Sir Pitt at once rushes up to town, before the funeral, looking for consolation where only he can find it. Becky brings him down word from his sister's room that the old lady is too ill to see him.

"So much the better," Sir Pitt answered: "I want to see you, Miss Sharp. I want you back at Queen's Crawley, miss," the baronet said. His eyes had such a strange look, and was fixed upon her so steadfastly that Rebecca Sharp began almost to tremble. Then she half promises, talks about the dear children, and angles with the old man. "I tell you I want you," he says; "I'm going back to the vuneral, will you come back? yes or no?"

"I daren't. I don't think—it wouldn't be right—to be alone with you sir," Becky said, seemingly in great agitation.

"I say again, I want you. I can't get along without you. I didn't see what it was till you went away. The house all goes wrong. It's not the same place. All my accounts has got muddled again. You must come back. Do come back. Dear Becky, do come."

"Come—as what, sir?" Rebecca gasped out.

"Come as Lady Crawley, if you like. There, will that zatisfy you? Come back and be my wife. You're vit for it. Birth be hanged. You're as good a lady as ever I see. You've got more brains in your little vinger than any baronet's wife in the country. Will you come? Yes or no?" Rebecca is startled, but the old man goes on. "I'll make you happy; see if I don't. You shall do what you like, spend what you like, and have it all your own way. I'll make you a settlement. I'll do everything regular. Look here," and the old man fell down on his knees and leered at her like a satyr.

But Rebecca, though she had been angling, angling for favour and love and power, had not expected this. For once in her life she loses her presence of mind, and exclaims: "Oh, Sir Pitt; oh, sir; I—I'm married already!" She has married Rawdon Crawley, Sir Pitt's youngest son, Miss Crawley's favourite among those of her family who are looking for her money. But she keeps her secret for the present, and writes a charming letter to the Captain: "Dearest,—Something tells that we shall conquer. You shall leave that odious regiment. Quit gaming, racing, and be a good boy, and we shall all live in Park Lane, and *ma tante* shall leave us all her money." *Ma tante's* money has been in her mind all through, but yet she loves him.

"Suppose the old lady doesn't come to," Rawdon said to his little wife as they sat together in the snug little Brompton lodgings. She had been trying the new piano all the morning. The new gloves fitted her to a nicety. The new shawl became her wonderfully. The new rings glittered on her little hands, and the new watch ticked at her waist.

"*I'll* make your fortune," she said; and Delilah patted Samson's cheek.

"You can do anything," he said, kissing the little hand. "By Jove you can! and we'll drive down to the Star and Garter and dine, by Jove!"

They were neither of them quite heartless at the moment, nor did Rawdon ever become quite bad. Then follow the adventures of Becky as a married woman, through all of which there is a glimmer of love for her stupid husband, while it is the real purpose of her heart to get money how she may—by her charms, by her wit, by her lies, by her readiness. She makes love to everyone—even to her sanctimonious brother-in-law, who becomes Sir Pitt in his time—and always succeeds. But in her love-making there is nothing of love. She gets hold of that well-remembered old reprobate, the Marquis of Steyne, who possesses the two valuable gifts of being very dissolute and very rich, and from him she obtains money and jewels to her heart's desire. The abominations of Lord Steyne are depicted in the strongest language of which *Vanity Fair* admits. The reader's hair stands almost on end in horror at the wickedness of the two wretches—at her desire for money, sheer money; and his for wickedness, sheer wickedness. Then the husband finds her out—poor Rawdon! who with all his faults and thick-headed stupidity, has become absolutely entranced by the wiles of his little wife. He is carried off to a sponging-house, in order that he may be out of the way, and, on escaping unexpectedly from thraldom, finds the lord in his wife's drawing-room. Whereupon he thrashes the old lord, nearly killing him; takes away the plunder which he finds on his wife's person, and hurries away to seek assistance as to further revenge;—for he is determined to shoot the marquis, or to be shot. He goes to one Captain Macmurdo, who is to act as his second, and there he pours out his heart. "You don't know how fond I was of that one," Rawdon said, half-inarticulately. "Damme, I followed her like a footman! I gave up everything I had to her. I'm a beggar because I would marry her. By Jove, sir, I've pawned my own watch to get her anything she fancied. And she—she's been making a purse for herself all the time, and grudged me a hundred pounds to get me out of quod!" His friend alleges that the wife may be innocent after all. "It may be so," Rawdon exclaimed, sadly; but this don't look very innocent!" And he showed the captain the thousand-pound note which he had found in Becky's pocket-book.

But the marquis can do better than fight; and Rawdon, in spite of his true love, can do better than follow the quarrel up to his own undoing. The marquis, on the spur of the moment, gets the lady's husband appointed governor of Coventry Island, with a salary of three thousand pounds a year; and poor Rawdon at last condescends to accept the appointment. He will not see his wife again, but he makes her an allowance out of his income.

In arranging all this, Thackeray is enabled to have a side blow at the British way of distributing patronage—for the favour of which he was afterwards himself a candidate. He quotes as

follows from *The Royalist* newspaper: "We hear that the governorship"—of Coventry Island—" has been offered to Colonel Rawdon Crawley, C.B., a distinguished Waterloo officer. We need not only men of acknowledged bravery, but men of administrative talents to superintend the affairs of our colonies; and we have no doubt that the gentleman selected by the Colonial Office to fill the lamented vacancy which has occurred at Coventry Island is admirably calculated for the post." The reader, however, is aware that the officer in question cannot write a sentence or speak two words correctly.

Our heroine's adventures are carried on much further, but they cannot be given here in detail. To the end she is the same—utterly false, selfish, covetous, and successful. To have made such a woman really in love would have been a mistake. Her husband she likes best—because he is, or was, her own. But there is no man so foul, so wicked, so unattractive, but that she can fawn over him for money and jewels. There are women to whom nothing is nasty, either in person, language, scenes, actions, or principle—and Becky is one of them; and yet she is herself attractive. A most wonderful sketch, for the perpetration of which all Thackeray's power of combine dindignation and humour was necessary!

The story of Amelia and her two lovers, George Osborne and Captain, or, as he came afterwards to be, Major, and Colonel Dobbin, is less interesting, simply because goodness and eulogy are less exciting than wickedness and censure. Amelia is a true, honest-hearted, thoroughly English young woman, who loves her love because he is grand—to her eyes—and loving him, loves him with all her heart. Readers have said that she is silly, only because she is not heroic. I do not know that she is more silly than many young ladies whom we who are old have loved in our youth, or than those whom our sons are loving at the present time. Readers complain of Amelia because she is absolutely true to nature. There are no Raffaellistic touches, no added graces, no divine romance. She is feminine all over, and British—loving, true, thoroughly unselfish, yet with a taste for having things comfortable, forgiving, quite capable of jealousy, but prone to be appeased at once, at the first kiss; quite convinced that her lover, her husband, her children are the people in all the world to whom the greatest consideration is due. Such a one is sure to be the dupe of a Becky Sharp, should a Becky Sharp come in her way—as is the case with so many sweet Amelias whom we have known. But in a matter of love she is sound enough and sensible enough—and she is as true as steel. I know no trait in Amelia which a man would be ashamed to find in his own daughter.

She marries her George Osborne, who, to tell the truth of him, is but a poor kind of fellow, though he is a brave soldier. He thinks much of his own person, and is selfish. Thackeray puts in a touch or two here and there by which he is made to be odious. He would rather give a present to himself than to the girl who loved him. Nevertheless, when her father is ruined he marries

her, and he fights bravely at Waterloo, and is killed. "No more firing was heard at Brussels. The pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and the city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart."

Then follows the long courtship of Dobbin, the true hero—he who has been the friend of George since their old school-days; who has lived with him and served him, and has also loved Amelia. But he has loved her—as one man may love another—solely with a view to the profit of his friend. He has known all along that George and Amelia have been engaged to each other as boy and girl. George would have neglected her, but Dobbin would not allow it. George would have jilted the girl who loved him, but Dobbin would not let him. He had nothing to get for himself, but loving her as he did, it was the work of his life to get for her all that she wanted.

George is shot at Waterloo, and then come fifteen years of widowhood—fifteen years during which Becky is carrying on her manœuvres—fifteen years during which Amelia cannot bring herself to accept the devotion of the old captain, who becomes at last a colonel. But at the end she is won. "The vessel is in port. He has got the prize he has been trying for all his life. The bird has come in at last. There it is, with its head on its shoulder, billing and cooing clean up to his heart, with soft, outstretched fluttering wings. This is what he has asked for every day and hour for eighteen years. This is what he has pined after. Here it is—the summit, the end, the last page of the third volume."

The reader as he closes the book has on his mind a strong conviction, the strongest possible conviction, that among men George is as weak and Dobbin as noble as any that he has met in literature; and that among women Amelia is as true and Becky as vile as any he has encountered. Of so much he will be conscious. In addition to this he will unconsciously have found that every page he has read will have been of interest to him. There has been no padding, no longueurs; every bit will have had its weight with him. And he will find too at the end, if he will think of it—though readers, I fear, seldom think much of this in regard to books they have read—that the lesson taught in every page has been good. There may be details of evil painted so as to disgust—painted almost to plainly—but none painted so as to allure.

CHAPTER IV.

PENDENNIS AND THE NEWCOMES.

THE absence of the heroic was, in Thackeray, so palpable to Thackeray himself that in his original preface to *Pendennis*, when he began to be aware that his reputation was made, he tells his public what they may expect and what they may not, and makes his joking complaint of the readers of his time because they will not endure with patience the true picture of a natural man. "Even the gentlemen of our age," he says—adding that the story of *Pendennis* is an attempt to describe one of them, just as he is—"even those we cannot show as they are with the notorious selfishness of their time and their education. Since the author of *Tom Jones* was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN. We must shape him, and give him a certain conventional temper." Then he rebukes his audience because they will not listen to the truth. "You will not hear what moves in the real world, what passes in society, in the clubs, colleges, mess-rooms—what is the life and talk of your sons." You want the Raffaellistic touch, or that of some painter of horrors equally removed from the truth. I tell you how a man really does act—as did Fielding with Tom Jones—but it does not satisfy you. You will not sympathise with this young man of mine, this Pendennis, because he is neither angel nor imp. If it be so, let it be so. I will not paint for you angels or imps, because I do not see them. The young man of the day, whom I do see, and of whom I know the inside and the out thoroughly, him I have painted for you; and here he is, whether you like the picture or not. This is what Thackeray meant, and, having this in his mind, he produced *Pendennis*.

The object of a novel should be to instruct in morals while it amuses. I cannot think but that every novelist who has thought much of his art will have realised as much as that for himself. Whether this may best be done by the transcendental or by the common-place is the question which it more behoves the reader than the author to answer, because the author may be fairly sure that he who can do the one will not, probably cannot, do the other. If a lad be only five feet high, he does not try to enlist in the Guards. Thackeray complains that many ladies have "remonstrated and subscribers left him," because of his realistic tendency. Nevertheless he has gone on with his work, and, in *Pendennis*, has

painted a young man as natural as Tom Jones. Had he expended himself in the attempt, he could not have drawn a Master of Ravenswood.

It has to be admitted that Pendennis is not a fine fellow. He is not as weak, as selfish, as untrustworthy as that George Osborne whom Amelia married in *Vanity Fair;* but nevertheless, he is weak, and selfish, and untrustworthy. He is not such a one as a father would wish to see his son, or a mother to welcome as a lover for her daughter. But then, fathers are so often doomed to find their sons not all that they wish, and mothers to see their girls falling in love with young men who are not Paladins. In our individual lives we are contented to endure an admixture of evil, which we should resent if imputed to us in the general. We presume ourselves to be truth-speaking, noble in our sentiments, generous in our actions, modest and unselfish, chivalrous and devoted. But we forgive and pass over in silence a few delinquencies among ourselves. What boy at school ever is a coward—in the general? What gentleman ever tells a lie? What young lady is greedy? We take it for granted, as though they were fixed rules in life, that our boys from our public schools look us in the face and are manly; that our gentlemen tell the truth as a matter of course; and that our young ladies are refined and unselfish. Thackeray is always protesting that it is not so, and that no good is to be done by blinking the truth. He knows that we have our little home experiences. Let us have the facts out, and mend what is bad if we can. This novel of *Pendennis* is one of his loudest protests to this effect.

I will not attempt to tell the story of Pendennis, how his mother loved him, how he first came to be brought up together with Laura Bell, how he thrashed the other boys when he was a boy, and how he fell in love with Miss Fotheringay, née Costigan, and was determined to marry her while he was still a hobbledehoy, how he went up to Boniface, that well-known college at Oxford, and there did no good, spending money which he had not got, and learning to gamble. The English gentleman, as we know, never lies; but Pendennis is not quite truthful; when the college tutor, thinking that he hears the rattling of dice, makes his way into Pen's room, Pen and his two companions are found with three *Homers* before them, and Pen asks the tutor with great gravity: "What was the present condition of the river Scamander, and whether it was navigable or no?" He tells his mother that, during a certain vacation he must stay up and read, instead of coming home—but, nevertheless, he goes up to London to amuse himself. The reader is soon made to understand that, though Pen may be a fine gentleman, he is not trustworthy. But he repents and comes home, and kisses his mother; only, alas! he will always be kissing somebody else also.

The story of the Amorys and the Claverings, and that wonderful French cook M. Alcide Mirobolant, forms one of those delightful digressions which Thackeray scatters through his novels rather than weaves into them. They generally have but little to

do with the story itself, and are brought in only as giving scope for some incident to the real hero or heroine. But in this digression Pen is very much concerned indeed, for he is brought to the very verge of matrimony with that peculiarly disagreeable lady Miss Amory. He does escape at last, but only within a few pages of the end, when we are made unhappy by the lady's victory over that poor young sinner Foker, with whom we have all come to sympathise, in spite of his vulgarity and fast propensities. She would to the last fain have married Pen, in whom she believes, thinking that he would make a name for her. "Il me faut des émotions," says Blanche. Whereupon the author, as he leaves her, explains the nature of this Miss Amory's feelings. "For this young lady was not able to carry out any emotion to the full, but had a sham enthusiasm, a sham hatred, a sham love, a sham taste, a sham grief; each of which flared and shone very vehemently for an instant, but subsided and gave place to the next sham emotion." Thackeray, when he drew this portrait, must certainly have had some special young lady in his view. But though we are made unhappy for Foker, Foker too escapes at last, and Blanche, with her emotions, marries that very doubtful nobleman Comte Montmorenci de Valentinois.

But all this of Miss Amory is but an episode. The purport of the story is the way in which the hero is made to enter upon the world, subject as he has been to the sweet teaching of his mother, and subject as he is made to be to the worldly lessons of his old uncle the major. Then he is ill, and nearly dies, and his mother comes up to nurse him. And there is his friend Warrington, of whose family down in Suffolk we shall have heard something when we have read *The Virginians*—one, I think, of the finest characters, as it is certainly one of the most touching, that Thackeray ever drew. Warrington, and Pen's mother, and Laura are our hero's better angels—angels so good as to make us wonder that a creature so weak should have had such angels about him; though we are driven to confess that their affection and loyalty for him are natural. There is a melancholy beneath the roughness of Warrington, and a feminine softness combined with the reticent manliness of the man, which have endeared him to readers beyond perhaps any character in the book. Major Pendennis has become immortal. Selfish, worldly, false, padded, caring altogether for things mean and poor in themselves; still the reader likes him. It is not quite all for himself. To Pen he is good—to Pen, who is the head of his family, and to come after him as the Pendennis of the day. To Pen and to Pen's mother he is beneficent after his lights. In whatever he undertakes, it is so contrived that the reader shall in some degree sympathise with him. And so it is with poor old Costigan, the drunken Irish captain, Miss Fotheringay's papa. He was not a pleasant person. "We have witnessed the déshabille of Major Pendennis," says our author; "will any one wish to be valet-de-chambre to our other hero, Costigan? It would seem that the captain, before issuing from his bedroom,

scented himself with otto of whisky." Yet there is a kindliness about him which softens our hearts, though in truth he is very careful that the kindness shall always be shown to himself.

Among these people Pen makes his way to the end of the novel, coming near to shipwreck on various occasions, and always deserving the shipwreck which he has almost encountered. Then there will arise the question whether it might not have been better that he should be altogether shipwrecked, rather than housed comfortably with such a wife as Laura, and left to that enjoyment of happiness forever after, which is the normal heaven prepared for heroes and heroines who have done their work well through three volumes. It is almost the only instance in all Thackeray's works in which this state of bliss is reached. George Osborne, who is the beautiful lover in *Vanity Fair*, is killed almost before our eyes, on the field of battle, and we feel that Nemesis has with justice taken hold of him. Poor old Dobbin does marry the widow, after fifteen years of further service, when we know him to be a middle-aged man and her a middle-aged woman. That glorious Paradise of which I have spoken requires a freshness which can hardly be attributed to the second marriage of a widow who has been fifteen years mourning for her first husband. Clive Newcome, "the first young man," if we may so call him, of the novel which I shall mention just now, is carried so far beyond his matrimonial elysium that we are allowed to see too plainly how far from true may be those promises of hymeneal happiness forever after. The cares of married life have settled down heavily upon his young head before we leave him. He not only marries, but loses his wife, and is left a melancholy widower with his son. Esmond and Beatrix certainly reach no such elysium as that of which we are speaking. But Pen, who surely deserved a Nemesis, though perhaps not one so black as that demanded by George Osborne's delinquencies, is treated as though he had been passed through the fire, and had come out—if not pure gold, still gold good enough for goldsmiths. "And what sort of a husband will this Pendennis be?" This is the question asked by the author himself at the end of the novel; feeling, no doubt, some hesitation as to the justice of what he had just done. "And what sort of a husband will this Pendennis be?" many a reader will ask, doubting the happiness of such a marriage and the future of Laura. The querists are referred to that lady herself, who, seeing his faults and wayward moods—seeing and owning that there are better men than he—loves him always with the most constant affection. The assertion could be made with perfect confidence, but is not to the purpose. That Laura's affection should be constant, no one would doubt; but more than that is wanted for happiness. How about Pendennis and his constancy?

The Newcomes, which I bracket in this chapter with *Pendennis*, was not written till after *Esmond*, and appeared between that novel and *The Virginians*, which was a sequel to *Esmond*. It is supposed to be edited by Pen, whose own adventures we have just completed, and is commenced by that celebrated night passed by

Colonel Newcome and his boy Clive at the Cave of Harmony, during which the colonel is at first so pleasantly received and so genially entertained, but from which he is at last banished, indignant at the iniquities of our drunken old friend Captain Costigan, with whom we had become intimate in Pen's own memoirs. The boy Clive is described as being probably about sixteen. At the end of the story he has run through the adventures of his early life, and is left a melancholy man, a widower, one who has suffered the extremity of misery from a stepmother, and who is wrapped up in the only son that is left to him—as had been the case with his father at the beginning of the novel. *The Newcomes*, therefore, like Thackeray's other tales, is rather a slice from the biographical memoirs of a family, than a romance or novel in itself.

It is full of satire from the first to the last page. Every word of it seems to have been written to show how vile and poor a place this world is; how prone men are to deceive, how prone to be deceived. There is a scene in which "his Excellency Rummun Loll, otherwise his Highness Rummun Loll," is introduced to Colonel Newcome—or rather presented—for the two men had known each other before. All London was talking of Rummun Loll, taking him for an Indian prince, but the colonel, who had served in India, knew better. Rummun Loll was no more than a merchant, who had made a precarious fortune by doubtful means. All the girls, nevertheless, are running after his Excellency. "He's known to have two wives already in India," says Barnes Newcome; "but, by gad, for a settlement, I believe some of the girls here would marry him." We have a delightful illustration of the London girls, with their bare necks and shoulders, sitting round Rummun Loll and worshipping him as he reposes on his low settee. There are a dozen of them so enchanted that the men who wish to get a sight of the Rummun are quite kept at a distance. This is satire on the women. A few pages on we come upon a clergyman who is no more real than Rummun Loll. The clergyman, Charles Honeyman, had married the colonel's sister and had lost his wife, and now the brothers-in-law meet. "'Poor, poor Emma!' exclaimed the ecclesiastic, casting his eyes towards the chandelier and passing a white cambric pocket-handkerchief gracefully before them. No man in London understood the ring business or the pocket-handkerchief business better, or smothered his emotion more beautifully. 'In the gayest moments, in the giddiest throng of fashion, the thoughts of the past will rise; the departed will be among us still. But this is not the strain wherewith to greet the friend newly arrived on our shores. How it rejoices me to behold you in old England!'" And so the satirist goes on with Mr. Honeyman the clergyman. Mr. Honeyman the clergyman has been already mentioned, in that extract made in our first chapter from *Lovel the Widower*. It was he who assisted another friend, "with his wheedling tongue," in inducing Thackeray to purchase that "neat little literary paper"—called then *The Museum*, but which was in truth *The National Standard*. In describing Barnes Newcome, the colonel's relative,

Thackeray in the same scene attacks the sharpness of the young men of business of the present day. There were, or were to be, some transactions with Rummun Loll, and Barnes Newcome, being in doubt, asks the colonel a question or two as to the certainty of the Rummun's money, much to the colonel's disgust. "The young man of business had dropped his drawl or his languor, and was speaking quite unaffectedly, good-naturedly, and selfishly. Had you talked to him for a week you would not have made him understand the scorn and loathing with which the colonel regarded him. Here was a young fellow as keen as the oldest curmudgeon—a lad with scarce a beard to his chin, that would pursue his bond as rigidly as Shylock." "Barnes Newcome never missed a church," he goes on, "or dressing for dinner. He never kept a tradesman waiting for his money. He seldom drank too much, and never was late for business, or huddled over his toilet, however brief his sleep or severe his headache. In a word, he was as scrupulously whited as any sepulchre in the whole bills of mortality." Thackeray had lately seen some Barnes Newcome when he wrote that.

It is all satire; but there is generally a touch of pathos even through the satire. It is satire when Miss Quigley, the governess in Park Street, falls in love with the old colonel after some dim fashion of her own. "When she is walking with her little charges in the Park, faint signals of welcome appear on her wan cheeks. She knows the dear colonel amidst a thousand horsemen." The colonel had drunk a glass of wine with her after his stately fashion, and the foolish old maid thinks too much of it. Then we are told how she knits purses for him, "as she sits alone in the schoolroom—high up in that lone house, when the little ones are long since asleep—before her dismal little tea-tray, and her little desk containing her mother's letters and her mementoes of home." Miss Quigley is an ass; but we are made to sympathise entirely with the ass, because of that morsel of pathos as to her mother's letters.

Clive Newcome, our hero, who is a second Pen, but a better fellow, is himself a satire on young men—on young men that are idle and ambitious at the same time. He is a painter; but, instead of being proud of his art, is half ashamed of it—because not being industrious he has not, while yet young, learned to excel. He is "doing" a portrait of Mrs. Pendennis, Laura, and thus speaks of his business. "No 666"—he is supposed to be quoting from the catalogue of the Royal Academy for the year—"No. 666. Portrait of Joseph Muggins, Esq., Newcome, George Street. No. 979. Portrait of Mrs. Muggins on her gray pony, Newcome. No. 579. Portrait of Joseph Muggins, Esq.'s dog Toby, Newcome. This is what I am fit for. These are the victories I have set myself on achieving. Oh, Mrs. Pendennis! isn't it humiliating? Why isn't there a war? Why haven't I a genius? There is a painter who lives hard by, and who begs me to come and look at his work. He is in the Muggins line too. He gets his canvases with a good light upon them; excludes the contemplation of other objects; stands

beside his picture in an attitude himself; and thinks that he and they are masterpieces. Oh me, what drivelling wretches we are! Fame!—except that of just the one or two—what's the use of it?" In all of which Thackeray is speaking his own feelings about himself as well as the world at large. What's the use of it all? Oh vanitas vanitatum! Oh vanity and vexation of spirit! "So Clive Newcome," he says afterwards, "lay on a bed of down and tossed and tumbled there. He went to fine dinners, and sat silent over them; rode fine horses, and black care jumped up behind the moody horseman." As I write this I have before me a letter from Thackeray to a friend describing his own success when *Vanity Fair* was coming out, full of the same feeling. He is making money, but he spends it so fast that he never has any; and as for the opinions expressed on his books, he cares little for what he hears. There was always present to him a feeling of black care seated behind the horseman—and would have been equally so had there been no real care present to him. A sardonic melancholy was the characteristic most common to him—which, however, was relieved by an always present capacity for instant frolic. It was these attributes combined which made him of all satirists the most humorous, and of all humorists the most satirical. It was these that produced the Osbornes, the Dobbins, the Pens, the Clives, and the Newcomes, whom, when he loved them the most, he could not save himself from describing as mean and unworthy. A somewhat heroic hero of romance—such a one, let us say, as Waverley, or Lovel in *The Antiquary*, or Morton in *Old Mortality*—was revolting to him, as lacking those foibles which human nature seemed to him to demand.

The story ends with two sad tragedies, neither of which would have been demanded by the story, had not such sadness been agreeable to the author's own idiosyncrasy. The one is the ruin of the old colonel's fortunes, he having allowed himself to be enticed into bubble speculations; and the other is the loss of all happiness, and even comfort, to Clive the hero, by the abominations of his mother-in-law. The woman is so iniquitous, and so tremendous in her iniquities, that she rises to tragedy. Who does not know Mrs. Mack the Campaigner? Why at the end of his long story should Thackeray have married his hero to so lackadaisical a heroine as poor little Rosey, or brought on the stage such a she-demon as Rosey's mother? But there is the Campaigner in all her vigour, a marvel of strength of composition—one of the most vividly drawn characters in fiction—but a woman so odious that one is induced to doubt whether she should have been depicted.

The other tragedy is altogether of a different kind, and though unnecessary to the story, and contrary to that practice of story-telling which seems to demand that calamities to those personages with whom we are to sympathise should not be brought in at the close of a work of fiction, is so beautifully told that no lover of Thackeray's work would be willing to part with it. The old colonel, as we have said, is ruined by speculation, and in his ruin is brought to accept the alms of the brotherhood of the Grey Friars. Then

we are introduced to the Charter House, at which, as most of us know, there still exists a brotherhood of the kind. He dons the gown—this old colonel, who had always been comfortable in his means, and latterly apparently rich—and occupies the single room, and eats the doled bread, and among his poor brothers sits in the chapel of his order. The description is perhaps as fine as anything that Thackeray ever did. The gentleman is still the gentleman, with all the pride of gentry;—but not the less is he the humble bedesman, aware that he is living upon charity, not made to grovel by any sense of shame, but knowing that, though his normal pride may be left to him, an outward demeanour of humility is befitting.

And then he dies. "At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat time—and just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said, 'Adsum'—and fell back. It was the word we used at school when names were called; and, lo, he whose heart was as that of a little child had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of his Maker!"

CHAPTER V.

ESMOND AND THE VIRGINIANS.

THE novel with which we are now going to deal I regard as the greatest work that Thackeray did. Though I do not hesitate to compare himself with himself, I will make no comparison between him and others; I therefore abstain from assigning to *Esmond* any special niche among prose fictions in the English language, but I rank it so high as to justify me in placing him among the small number of the highest class of English novelists. Much as I think of *Barry Lyndon* and *Vanity Fair*, I cannot quite say this of them; but, as a chain is not stronger than its weakest link, so is a poet, or a dramatist, or a novelist to be placed in no lower level than that which he has attained by his highest sustained flight. The excellence which has been reached here Thackeray achieved, without doubt, by giving a greater amount of forethought to the work he had before him than had been his wont. When we were young we used to be told, in our house at home, that "elbow-grease" was the one essential necessary to getting a tough piece of work well done. If a mahogany table was to be made to shine, it was elbow-grease that the operation needed. Forethought is the elbow-grease which a novelist—or poet—or dramatist—requires. It is not only his plot that has to be turned and re-turned in his mind, not his plot chiefly, but he has to make himself sure of his situations, of his characters, of his effects, so that when the time comes for hitting the nail he may know where to hit it on the head—so that he may himself understand the passion, the calmness, the virtues, the vices, the rewards and punishments which he means to explain to others—so that his proportions shall be correct, and he be saved from the absurdity of devoting two-thirds of his book to the beginning, or two-thirds to the completion of his task. It is from want of this special labour, more frequently than from intellectual deficiency, that the tellers of stories fail so often to hit their nails on the head. To think of a story is much harder work than to write it. The author can sit down with the pen in his hand for a given time, and produce a certain number of words. That is comparatively easy, and if he have a conscience in regard to his task, work will be done regularly. But to think it over as you lie in bed, or walk about, or sit cosily over your fire, to turn it all in your thoughts, and make the things fit—that requires elbow-grease of the mind. The

arrangement of the words is as though you were walking simply along a road. The arrangement of your story is as though you were carrying a sack of flour while you walked. Fielding had carried his sack of flour before he wrote *Tom Jones*, and Scott his before he produced *Ivanhoe*. So had Thackeray done—a very heavy sack of flour—in creating *Esmond*. In *Vanity Fair*, in *Pendennis*, and in *The Newcomes*, there was more of that mere wandering in which no heavy burden was borne. The richness of the author's mind, the beauty of his language, his imagination and perception of character, are all there. For that which was lovely he has shown his love, and for the hateful his hatred; but, nevertheless, they are comparatively idle books. His only work, as far as I can judge them, in which there is no touch of idleness, is *Esmond*. *Barry Lyndon* is consecutive, and has the well-sustained purpose of exhibiting a finished rascal; but *Barry Lyndon* is not quite the same from beginning to end. All his full-fledged novels, except *Esmond*, contain rather strings of incidents and memoirs of individuals, than a completed story. But *Esmond* is a whole from beginning to end, with its tale well told, its purpose developed, its moral brought home—and its nail hit well on the head and driven in.

I told Thackeray once that it was not only his best work, but so much the best, that there was none second to it. "That was what I intended," he said, "but I have failed. Nobody reads it. After all, what does it matter?" he went on after awhile. "If they like anything, one ought to be satisfied. After all, Esmond was a prig." Then he laughed and changed the subject, not caring to dwell on thoughts painful to him. The elbow-grease of thinking was always distasteful to him, and had no doubt been so when he conceived and carried out this work.

To the ordinary labour necessary for such a novel he added very much by his resolution to write it in a style different, not only from that which he had made his own, but from that also which belonged to the time. He had devoted himself to the reading of the literature of Queen Anne's reign, and having chosen to throw his story into that period, and to create in it personages who were to be peculiarly concerned with the period, he resolved to use as the vehicle for his story the forms of expression then prevalent. No one who has not tried it can understand how great is the difficulty of mastering a phase of one's own language other than that which habit has made familiar. To write in another language, if the language be sufficiently known, is a much less arduous undertaking. The lad who attempts to write his essay in Ciceronian Latin struggles to achieve a style which is not indeed common to him, but is more common than any other he has become acquainted with in that tongue. But Thackeray in his work had always to remember his Swift, his Steele, and his Addison, and to forget at the same time the modes of expression which the day had adopted. Whether he asked advice on the subject, I do not know. But I feel sure that if he did he must have been counselled against it.

Let my reader think what advice he would give to any writer on such a subject. Probably he asked no advice, and would have taken none. No doubt he found himself, at first imperceptibly, gliding into a phraseology which had attractions for his ear, and then probably was so charmed with the peculiarly masculine forms of sentences which thus became familiar to him, that he thought it would be almost as difficult to drop them altogether as altogether to assume the use of them. And if he could do so successfully, how great would be the assistance given to the local colouring which is needed for a novel in prose, the scene of which is thrown far back from the writer's period! Were I to write a poem about Cœur de Lion, I should not mar my poem by using the simple language of the day; but if I write a prose story of the time, I cannot altogether avoid some attempt at far-away quaintnesses in language. To call a purse a "gypsire," and to begin your little speeches with "Marry come up," or to finish them with "Quotha," are but poor attempts. But even they have had their effect. Scott did the best he could with his Cœur de Lion. When we look to it we find that it was but little; though in his hands it passed for much. "By my troth," said the knight, "thou hast sung well and heartily, and in high praise of thine order." We doubt whether he achieved any similarity to the language of the time; but still, even in the little which he attempted, there was something of the picturesque. But how much more would be done if in very truth the whole language of a story could be thrown with correctness into the form of expression used at the time depicted?

It was this that Thackeray tried in his *Esmond*, and he has done it almost without a flaw. The time in question is near enough to us, and the literature sufficiently familiar to enable us to judge. Whether folk swore by their troth in the days of King Richard I. we do not know, but when we read Swift's letters, and Addison's papers, or Defoe's novels, we do catch the veritable sounds of Queen Anne's age, and can say for ourselves whether Thackeray has caught them correctly or not. No reader can doubt that he has done so. Nor is the reader ever struck with the affectation of an assumed dialect. The words come as though they had been written naturally—though not natural to the middle of the nineteenth century. It was a *tour de force*, and successful as such a *tour de force* so seldom is. But though Thackeray was successful in adopting the tone he wished to assume, he never quite succeeded, as far as my ear can judge, in altogether dropping it again.

And yet it has to be remembered that though *Esmond* deals with the times of Queen Anne, and "copies the language" of the time, as Thackeray himself says in the dedication, the story is not supposed to have been written till the reign of George II. Esmond in his narrative speaks of Fielding and Hogarth, who did their best work under George II. The idea is that Henry Esmond, the hero, went out to Virginia after the events told, and there wrote the memoir in the form of an autobiography: The estate of Castlewood, in Virginia, had been given to the Esmond family by Charles II.;

and this Esmond, our hero, finding that expatriation would best suit both his domestic happiness and his political difficulties—as the reader of the book will understand might be the case—settles himself in the colony, and there writes the history of his early life. He retains the manners, and with the manners the language of his youth. He lives among his own people, a country gentleman with a broad domain, mixing but little with the world beyond, and remains an English gentleman of the time of Queen Anne. The story is continued in *The Virginians*, the name given to a record of two lads who were grandsons of Harry Esmond, whose names are Warrington. Before *The Virginians* appeared we had already become acquainted with a scion of that family, the friend of Arthur Pendennis, a younger son of Sir Miles Warrington, of Suffolk. Henry Esmond's daughter had in a previous generation married a younger son of the then baronet. This is mentioned now to show the way in which Thackeray's mind worked afterwards upon the details and characters which he had originated in *Esmond.*

It is not my purpose to tell the story here, but rather to explain the way in which it is written, to show how it differs from other stories, and thus to explain its effect. Harry Esmond, who tells the story, is of course the hero. There are two heroines who equally command our sympathy—Lady Castlewood, the wife of Harry's kinsman, and her daughter Beatrix. Thackeray himself declared the man to be a prig, and he was not altogether wrong. Beatrix, with whom throughout the whole book he is in love, knew him well. "Shall I be frank with you, Harry," she says, when she is engaged to another suitor, "and say that if you had not been down on your knees and so humble, you might have fared better with me? A woman of my spirit, cousin, is to be won by gallantry, and not by sighs and rueful faces. All the time you are worshipping and singing hymns to me, I know very well I am no goddess." And again: "As for you, you want a woman to bring your slippers and cap, and to sit at your feet and cry, O caro, caro! O bravo! whilst you read your Shakespeares and Miltons and stuff." He was a prig, and the girl he loved knew him, and being quite of another way of thinking herself, would have nothing to say to him in the way of love. But without something of the aptitudes of a prig the character which the author intended could not have been drawn. There was to be courage—military courage—and that propensity to fighting which the tone of the age demanded in a finished gentleman. Esmond, therefore, is already enough to use his sword. But at the same time he has to live as becomes one whose name is in some degree under a cloud; for though he be not in truth an illegitimate offshoot of the noble family which is his, and though he knows that he is not so, still he has to live as though he were. He becomes a soldier, and it was just then that our army was accustomed "to swear horribly in Flanders." But Esmond likes his books, and cannot swear or drink like other soldiers. Nevertheless he has a sort of liking for fast ways in others, knowing that such are the ways of a gallant cavalier. There is a melancholy over his

life which makes him always, to himself and to others, much older than his years. He is well aware that, being as he is, it is impossible that Beatrix should love him. Now and then there is a dash of lightness about him, as though he had taught himself, in his philosophy, that even sorrow may be borne with a smile—as though there was something in him of the Stoic's doctrine, which made him feel that even disappointed love should not be seen to wound too deep. But still, when he smiles, even when he indulges in some little pleasantry, there is that garb of melancholy over him which always makes a man a prig. But he is a gentleman from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. Thackeray had let the whole power of his intellect apply itself to a conception of the character of a gentleman. This man is brave, polished, gifted with that old-fashioned courtesy which ladies used to love, true as steel, loyal as faith himself, with a power of self-abnegation which astonishes the criticising reader when he finds such a virtue carried to such an extent without seeming to be unnatural. To draw the picture of a man, and say that he is gifted with all the virtues, is easy enough—easy enough to describe him as performing all the virtues. The difficulty is to put your man on his legs, and make him move about, carrying his virtues with a natural gait, so that the reader shall feel that he is becoming acquainted with flesh and blood, not with a wooden figure. The virtues are all there with Henry Esmond, and the flesh and blood also, so that the reader believes in them. But still there is left a flavour of the character which Thackeray himself tasted when he called his hero a prig.

The two heroines, Lady Castlewood and Beatrix, are mother and daughter, of whom the former is in love with Esmond, and the latter is loved by him. Fault has been found with the story, because of the unnatural rivalry—because it has been felt that a mother's solicitude for her daughter should admit of no such juxtaposition. But the criticism has come, I think, from those who have failed to understand, not from those who have understood the tale; not because they have read it, but because they have not read it, and have only looked at it or heard of it. Lady Castlewood is perhaps ten years older than the boy Esmond, whom she first finds in her husband's house, and takes as a *protégé;* and from the moment in which she finds that he is in love with her own daughter, she does her best to bring about a marriage between them. Her husband is alive, and though he is a drunken brute—after the manner of lords of that time—she is thoroughly loyal to him. The little touches, of which the woman is herself altogether unconscious, that gradually turn a love for the boy into a love for the man, are told so delicately, that it is only at last that the reader perceives what has in truth happened to the woman. She is angry with him, grateful to him, careful over him, gradually conscious of all his worth, and of all that he does to her and hers, till at last her heart is unable to resist. But then she is a widow:—and Beatrix has declared that her ambition will not allow her to marry so humble a swain, and Esmond has become—as he says of himself

when he calls himself "an old gentleman"—"the guardian of all the family," "fit to be the grandfather of you all."

The character of Lady Castlewood has required more delicacy in its manipulation than perhaps any other which Thackeray has drawn. There is a mixture in it of self-negation and of jealousy, of gratefulness of heart and of the weary thoughtfulness of age, of occasional sprightiness with deep melancholy, of injustice with a thorough appreciation of the good around her, of personal weakness—as shown always in her intercourse with her children, and of personal strength—as displayed when she vindicates the position of her kinsman Henry to the Duke of Hamilton, who is about to marry Beatrix;—a mixture which has required a master's hand to trace. These contradictions are essentially feminine. Perhaps it must be confessed that in the unreasonableness of the woman, the author has intended to bear more harshly on the sex than it deserves. But a true woman will forgive him, because of the truth of Lady Castlewood's heart. Her husband had been killed in a duel, and there were circumstances which had induced her at the moment to quarrel with Harry and to be unjust to him. He had been ill, and had gone away to the wars, and then she had learned the truth, and had been wretched enough. But when he comes back, and she sees him, by chance at first, as the anthem is being sung in the cathedral choir, as she is saying her prayers, her heart flows over with tenderness to him. "I knew you would come back," she said; "and to-day, Henry, in the anthem when they sang it—'When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream'—I thought, yes, like them that dream—them that dream. And then it went on, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy, and he that goeth forth and weepeth shall doubtless come home again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.' I looked up from the book and saw you. I was not surprised when I saw you. I knew you would come, my dear, and saw the gold sunshine round your head." And so it goes on running into expressions of heart-melting tenderness. And yet she herself does not know that her own heart is seeking his with all a woman's love. She is still willing that he should possess Beatrix. "I would call you my son," she says, "sooner than the greatest prince in Europe." But she warns him of the nature of her own girl. "'Tis for my poor Beatrix I tremble, whose headstrong will affrights me, whose jealous temper, and whose vanity no prayers of mine can cure." It is but very gradually that Esmond becomes aware of the truth. Indeed, he has not become altogether aware of it till the tale closes. The reader does not see that transfer of affection from the daughter to the mother which would fail to reach his sympathy. In the last page of the last chapter it is told that it is so—that Esmond marries Lady Castlewood—but it is not told till all the incidents of the story have been completed.

But of the three characters I have named, Beatrix is the one that has most strongly exercised the writer's powers, and will most interest the reader. As far as outward person is concerned, she is

very lovely—so charming that every man that comes near to her submits himself to her attractions and caprices. It is but rarely that a novelist can succeed in impressing his reader with a sense of female loveliness. The attempt is made so frequently—comes so much as a matter of course in every novel that is written, and fails so much as a matter of course, that the reader does not feel the failure. There are things which we do not expect to have done for us in literature, because they are done so seldom. Novelists are apt to describe the rural scenes among which their characters play their parts, but seldom leave any impression of the places described. Even in poetry how often does this occur? The words used are pretty, well chosen, perhaps musical to the ear, and in that way befitting; but unless the spot has violent characteristics of its own, such as Burley's cave or the waterfall of Lodore, no striking portrait is left. Nor are we disappointed as we read, because we have not been taught to expect it to be otherwise. So it is with those word-painted portraits of women, which are so frequently given and so seldom convey any impression. Who has an idea of the outside look of Sophia Western, or Edith Bellenden, or even of Imogen, though Iachimo, who described her, was so good at words? A series of pictures—illustrations—as we have with Dickens' novels, and with Thackeray's, may leave an impression of a figure—though even then not often of feminine beauty. But in this work Thackeray has succeeded in imbuing us with a sense of the outside loveliness of Beatrix by the mere force of words. We are not only told it, but we feel that she was such a one as a man cannot fail to covet, even when his judgment goes against his choice.

Here the judgment goes altogether against the choice. The girl grows up before us from her early youth till her twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth year, and becomes—such as her mother described her—one whose headlong will, whose jealousy, and whose vanity nothing could restrain. She has none of those soft foibles, half allied to virtues, by which weak women fall away into misery or perhaps distraction. She does not want to love or to be loved. She does not care to be fondled. She has no longing for caresses. She wants to be admired—and to make use of the admiration she shall achieve for the material purposes of her life. She wishes to rise in the world; and her beauty is the sword with which she must open her oyster. As to her heart, it is a thing of which she becomes aware, only to assure herself that it must be laid aside and put out of the question. Now and again Esmond touches it. She just feels that she has a heart to be touched. But she never has a doubt as to her conduct in that respect. She will not allow her dreams of ambition to be disturbed by such folly as love.

In all that there might be something, if not good and great, nevertheless grand, if her ambition, though worldly, had in it a touch of nobility. But this poor creature is made with her bleared blind eyes to fall into the very lowest depths of feminine ignobility. One lover comes after another. Harry Esmond is, of course, the

lover with whom the reader interests himself. At last there comes a duke—fifty years old, indeed, but with semi-royal appanages. As his wife she will become a duchess, with many diamonds, and be Her Excellency. The man is stern, cold, and jealous; but she does not doubt for a moment. She is to be Duchess of Hamilton, and towers already in pride of place above her mother, and her kinsman lover, and all her belongings. The story here, with its little incidents of birth, and blood, and ignoble pride, and gratified ambition, with a dash of true feminine nobility on the part of the girl's mother, is such as to leave one with the impression that it has hardly been beaten in English prose fiction. Then, in the last moment, the duke is killed in a duel, and the news is brought to the girl by Esmond. She turns upon him and rebukes him harshly. Then she moves away, and feels in a moment that there is nothing left for her in this world, and that she can only throw herself upon devotion for consolation. "I am best in my own room and by myself," she said. Her eyes were quite dry, nor did Esmond ever see them otherwise, save once, in respect of that grief. She gave him a cold hand as she went out. "Thank you, brother," she said in a low voice, and with a simplicity more touching than tears; "all that you have said is true and kind, and I will go away and will ask pardon."

But the consolation coming from devotion did not go far with such a one as her. We cannot rest on religion merely by saying that we will do so. Very speedily there comes consolation in another form. Queen Anne is on her deathbed, and a young Stuart prince appears upon the scene, of whom some loyal hearts dream that they can make a king. He is such as Stuarts were, and only walks across the novelist's canvas to show his folly and heartlessness. But there is a moment in which Beatrix thinks that she may rise in the world to the proud place of a royal mistress. That is her last ambition! That is her pride! That is to be her glory! The bleared eyes can see no clearer than that. But the mock prince passes away, and nothing but the disgrace of the wish remains.

Such is the story of *Esmond*, leaving with it, as does all Thackeray's work, a melancholy conviction of the vanity of all things human. *Vanitas vanitatum*, as he wrote on the pages of the French lady's album, and again in one of the earlier numbers of *The Cornhill Magazine*. With much that is picturesque, much that is droll, much that is valuable as being a correct picture of the period selected, the gist of the book is melancholy throughout. It ends with the promise of happiness to come, but that is contained merely in a concluding paragraph. The one woman, during the course of the story, becomes a widow, with a living love in which she has no hope, with children for whom her fears are almost stronger than her affection, who never can rally herself to happiness for a moment. The other, with all her beauty and all her brilliance, becomes what we have described—and marries at last her brother's tutor, who becomes a bishop by means of her in-

trigues. Esmond, the hero, who is compounded of all good gifts, after a childhood and youth tinged throughout with melancholy, vanishes from us, with the promise that he is to be rewarded by the hand of the mother of the girl he has loved.

And yet there is not a page in the book over which a thoughtful reader cannot pause with delight. The nature in it is true nature. Given a story thus sad, and persons thus situated, and it is thus that the details would follow each other, and thus that the people would conduct themselves. It was the tone of Thackeray's mind to turn away from the prospect of things joyful, and to see—or believe that he saw—in all human affairs, the seed of something base, of something which would be antagonistic to true contentment. All his snobs, and all his fools, and all his knaves, come from the same conviction. It is not the doctrine on which our religion is founded—though the sadness of it there is alleviated by the doubtful promise of a heaven?

> Though thrice a thousand years are passed
> Since David's son, the sad and splendid,
> The weary king ecclesiast
> Upon his awful tablets penned it.

So it was that Thackeray preached his sermon. But melancholy though it be, the lesson taught in *Esmond* is salutary from beginning to end. The sermon truly preached is that glory can only come from that which is truly glorious, and that the results of meanness end always in the mean. No girl will be taught to wish to shine like Beatrix, nor will any youth be made to think that to gain the love of such a one it can be worth his while to expend his energy or his heart.

Esmond was published in 1852. It was not till 1858, some time after he had returned from his lecturing tours, that he published the sequel called *The Virginians*. It was first brought out in twenty-four monthly numbers, and ran through the years 1858 and 1859, Messrs. Bradbury and Evans having been the publishers. It takes up by no means the story of *Esmond*, and hardly the characters. The twin lads, who are called the Virginians, and whose name is Warrington, are grandsons of Esmond and his wife Lady Castlewood. Their one daughter, born at the estate in Virginia, had married a Warrington, and the Virginians are the issue of that marriage. In the story, one is sent to England, there to make his way; and the other is for a while supposed to have been killed by the Indians. How he was not killed, but after awhile comes again forward in the world of fiction, will be found in the story, which it is not our purpose to set forth here. The most interesting part of the narrative is that which tells us of the later fortunes of Madame Beatrix—the Baroness Bernstein—the lady who had in her youth been Beatrix Esmond, who had then condescended to become Mrs. Tusher, the tutor's wife, whence she rose to be the "lady" of a bishop, and, after the bishop had been put to rest under a load of

marble, had become the baroness—a rich old woman, courted by all her relatives because of her wealth.

In *The Virginians*, as a work of art, is discovered, more strongly than had shown itself yet in any of his works, that propensity to wandering which came to Thackeray because of his idleness. Is, I think, to be found in every book he ever wrote—except *Esmond;* but is here more conspicuous than it had been in his earlier years. Though he can settle himself down to his pen and ink—not always even to that without a struggle, but to that with sufficient burst of energy to produce a large average amount of work—he cannot settle himself down to the task of contriving a story. There have been those—and they have not been bad judges of literature—who have told me that they have best liked these vague narratives. The mind of the man has been clearly exhibited in them. In them he has spoken out his thoughts, and given the world to know his convictions, as well as could have been done in the carrying out any well-conducted plot. And though the narratives be vague, the characters are alive. In *The Virginians*, the two young men and their mother, and the other ladies with whom they have to deal, and especially their aunt, the Baroness Bernstein, are all alive. For desultory reading, for that picking up of a volume now and again which requires permission to forget the plot of a novel, this novel is admirably adapted. There is not a page of it vacant or dull. But he who takes it up to read as a whole, will find that it is the work of a desultory writer, to whom it is not unfrequently difficult to remember the incidents of his own narrative. "How good it is, even as it is!—but if he would have done his best for us, what might he not have done!" This, I think, is what we feel when we read *The Virginians*. The author's mind has in one way been active enough—and powerful, as it always is; but he has been unable to fix it to an intended purpose, and has gone on from day to day furthering the difficulty he has intended to master, till the book, under the stress of circumstances—demands for copy and the like—has been completed before the difficulty has even in truth been encountered.

CHAPTER VI.

THACKERAY'S BURLESQUES.

As so much of Thackeray's writing partakes of the nature of burlesque, it would have been unnecessary to devote a separate chapter to the subject, were it not that there are among his tales two or three so exceedingly good of their kind, coming so entirely up to our idea of what a prose burlesque should be, that were I to omit to mention them I should pass over a distinctive portion of our author's work.

The volume called *Burlesques*, published in 1869, begins with the *Novels by Eminent Hands*, and *Jeames's Diary*, to which I have already alluded. It contains also *The Tremendous Adventures of Major Gahagan*, *A Legend of the Rhine*, and *Rebecca and Rowena*. It is of these that I will now speak. *The History of the Next French Revolution* and *Cox's Diary*, with which the volume is concluded, are, according to my thinking, hardly equal to the others; nor are they so properly called burlesques.

Nor will I say much of Major Gahagan, though his adventures are very good fun. He is a warrior—that is, of course—and he is one in whose wonderful narrative all that distant India can produce in the way of boasting, is superadded to Ireland's best efforts in the same line. Baron Munchausen was nothing to him; and to the bare and simple miracles of the baron is joined that humour without which Thackeray never tells any story. This is broad enough, no doubt, but is still humour—as when the major tells us that he always kept in his own apartment a small store of gunpowder; "always keeping it under my bed, with a candle burning for fear of accidents." Or when he describes his courage; "I was running—running as the brave stag before the hounds—running, as I have done a great number of times in my life, when there was no help for it but a run." Then he tells us of his digestion. "Once in Spain I ate the leg of a horse, and was so eager to swallow this morsel, that I bolted the shoe as well as the hoof, and never felt the slightest inconvenience from either." He storms a citadel, and has only a snuff-box given him for his reward. "Never mind," says Major Gahagan; "when they want me to storm a fort again, I shall know better." By which we perceive that the major remembered his Horace, and had in his mind the soldier who had lost his purse. But the major's adventures, excellent as they are,

lack the continued interest which is attached to the two following stories.

Of what nature is the *Legend of the Rhine*, we learn from the commencement. "It was in the good old days of chivalry, when every mountain that bathes its shadow in the Rhine had its castle; not inhabited as now by a few rats and owls, nor covered with moss and wallflowers and funguses and creeping ivy. No, no; where the ivy now clusters there grew strong portcullis and bars of steel; where the wallflowers now quiver in the ramparts there were silken banners embroidered with wonderful heraldry; men-at-arms marched where now you shall only see a bank of moss or a hideous black champignon; and in the place of the rats and owlets, I warrant me there were ladies and knights to revel in the great halls, and to feast and dance, and to make love there." So that we know well beforehand of what kind will this story be. It will be a pure romance—burlesqued. "Ho seneschal, fill me a cup of hot liquor; put sugar in it, good fellow; yea, and a little hot water—but very little, for my soul is sad as I think of those days and knights of old."

A knight is riding alone on his war-horse, with all his armour with him—and his luggage. His rank is shown by the name on his portmanteau, and his former address and present destination by a card which was attached. It had run, "Count Ludwig de Hombourg, Jerusalem, but the name of the Holy City had been dashed out with the pen, and that of Godesberg substituted." "By St. Hugo of Katzenellenbogen," said the good knight, shivering, "'tis colder here than at Damascus. Shall I be at Godesberg in time for dinner?" He has come to see his friend Count Karl, Margrave of Godesberg.

But at Godesberg everything is in distress and sorrow. There is a new inmate there, one Sir Gottfried, since whose arrival the knight of the castle has become a wretched man, having been taught to believe all evils of his wife, and of his child Otto, and a certain stranger, one Hildebrandt. Gottfried, we see with half an eye, has done it all. It is in vain that Ludwig de Hombourg tells his old friend Karl that this Gottfried is a thoroughly bad fellow, that he had been found to be a card-sharper in the Holy Land, and had been drummed out of his regiment. "'Twas but some silly quarrel over the wine-cup," says Karl. "Hugo de Brodenel would have no black bottle on the board." We think we can remember the quarrel of "Brodenel" and the black bottle, though so many things have taken place since that.

There is a festival in the castle, and Hildebrandt comes with the other guests. Then Ludwig's attention is called by poor Karl, the father, to a certain family likeness. Can it be that he is not the father of his own child? He is playing cards with his friend Ludwig when that traitor Gottfried comes and whispers to him, and makes an appointment. "I will be there too," thought Count Ludwig, the good Knight of Hombourg.

On the next morning, before the stranger knight had shaken off

his slumbers, all had been found out and everything done. The lady had been sent to a convent and her son to a monastery. The knight of the castle has no comfort but in his friend Gottfried, a distant cousin who is to inherit everything. All this is told to Sir Ludwig—who immediately takes steps to repair the mischief. "A cup of coffee straight," says he to the servitors. "Bid the cook pack me a sausage and bread in paper, and the groom saddle Streithengst. We have far to ride." So this redresser of wrongs starts off, leaving the Margrave in his grief.

Then there is a great fight between Sir Ludwig and Sir Gottfried, admirably told in the manner of the later chroniclers—a hermit sitting by and describing everything almost as well as Rebecca did on the tower. Sir Ludwig being in the right, of course gains the day. But the escape of the fallen knight's horse is the cream of this chapter. "Away, ay, away!—away amid the green vineyards and golden cornfields; away up the steep mountains, where he frightened the eagles in their eyries; away down the clattering ravines, where the flashing cataracts tumble; away through the dark pine-forests, where the hungry wolves are howling; away over the dreary wolds, where the wild wind walks alone; away through the splashing quagmires, where the will-o'-the-wisp slunk frightened among the reeds; away through light and darkness, storm and sunshine; away by tower and town, highroad and hamlet. . . . Brave horse! gallant steed! snorting child of Araby! On went the horse, over mountains, rivers, turnpikes, applewomen; and never stopped until he reached a livery-stable in Cologne, where is master was accustomed to put him up!"

The conquered knight, Sir Gottfried, of course reveals the truth. This Hildebrandt is no more than the lady's brother—as it happened a brother in disguise—and hence the likeness. Wicked knights, when they die, always divulge their wicked secrets, and this knight Gottfried does so now. Sir Ludwig carries the news home to the afflicted husband and father; who of course instantly sends off messengers for his wife and son. The wife won't come. All she wants is to have her dresses and jewels sent to her. Of so cruel a husband she has had enough. As for the son, he has jumped out of a boat on the Rhine, as he was being carried to his monastery, and was drowned!

But he was not drowned, but had only dived. "The gallant boy swam on beneath the water, never lifting his head for a single moment between Godesberg and Cologne; the distance being twenty-five or thirty miles."

Then he becomes an archer, dressed in green from head to foot. How it was is all told in the story; and he goes to shoot for a prize at the Castle of Adolf the Duke of Cleeves. On his way he shoots a raven marvellously—almost as marvellously as did Robin Hood the twig in Ivanhoe. Then one of his companions is married, or nearly married, to the mysterious "Lady of Windeck"—would have been married but for Otto, and that the bishop and dean, who were dragged up from their long-ago graves to perform

the ghostly ceremony, were prevented by the ill-timed mirth of a certain old canon of the church named Schidnischmidt. The reader has to read the name out loud before he recognises an old friend. But this of the Lady of Windeck is an episode.

How at the shooting-match, which of course ensued, Otto shot for and won the heart of a fair lady, the duke's daughter, need not be told here, nor how he quarrelled with the Rowski of Donnerblitz—the hideous and sulky, but rich and powerful, nobleman who had come to take the hand, whether he could win the heart or not, of the daughter of the duke. It is all arranged according to the proper and romantic order. Otto, though he enlists in the duke's archer-guard as simple soldier, contrives to fight with the Rowski de Donnerblitz, Margrave of Eulenschrenkenstein, and of course kills him. "'Yield, yield, Sir Rowski!' shouted he, in a calm voice. A blow dealt madly at his head was the reply. It was the last blow that the Count of Eulenschrenkenstein ever struck in battle. The curse was on his lips as the crashing steel descended into his brain and split it in two. He rolled like a dog from his horse, his enemy's knee was in a moment on his chest, and the dagger of mercy at his throat, as the knight once more called upon him to yield." The knight was of course the archer who had come forward as an unknown champion, and had touched the Rowski's shield with the point of his lance. For this story, as well as the rest, is a burlesque on our dear old favourite Ivanhoe.

That everything goes right at last, that the wife comes back from her monastery, and joins her jealous husband, and that the duke's daughter has always, in truth, known that the poor archer was a noble knight—these things are all matters of course.

But the best of the three burlesques is *Rebecca and Rowena, or A Romance upon Romance*, which I need not tell my readers is a continuation of *Ivanhoe*. Of this burlesque it is the peculiar characteristic that, while it has been written to ridicule the persons and the incidents of that perhaps the most favourite novel in the English language, it has been so written that it would not have offended the author had he lived to read it, nor does it disgust or annoy those who most love the original. There is not a word in it having an intention to belittle Scott. It has sprung from the genuine humour created in Thackeray's mind by his aspect of the romantic. We remember how reticent, how dignified was Rowena —how cold we perhaps thought her, whether there was so little of that billing and cooing, that kissing and squeezing, between her and Ivanhoe which we used to think necessary to lovers' blisses. And there was left, too, on our minds an idea that Ivanhoe had liked the Jewess almost as well as Rowena, and that Rowena might possibly have become jealous. Thackeray's mind at once went to work and pictured to him a Rowena such as such a woman might become after marriage; and as Ivanhoe was of a melancholy nature and apt to be hipped, and grave, and silent, as a matter of course Thackeray presumes him to have been henpecked after his marriage.

Our dear Wamba disturbs his mistress in some devotional conversation with her chaplain, and the stern lady orders that the fool shall have three-dozen lashes. "I got you out of Front de Bœuf's castle," said poor Wamba, piteously appealing to Sir Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, "and canst thou not save me from the lash?"

"Yes; from Front de Bœuf's castle, *when you were locked up with the Jewess in the tower!*" said Rowena, haughtily replying to the timid appeal of her husband. "Gurth, give him four-dozen" —and this was all poor Wamba got by applying for the mediation of his master. Then the satirist moralises: "Did you ever know a right-minded woman pardon another for being handsomer and more love-worthy than herself?" Rowena is "always flinging Rebecca into Ivanhoe's teeth;" and altogether life at Rotherwood, as described by the later chronicles, is not very happy even when most domestic. Ivanhoe becomes sad and moody. He takes to drinking, and his lady does not forget to tell him of it. "Ah, dear axe!" he exclaims, apostrophising his weapon, "ah, gentle steel! that was a merry time when I sent thee crashing into the pate of the Emir Abdul Melek!" There was nothing left to him but his memories; and "in a word, his life was intolerable." So he determines that he will go and look after King Richard, who of course was wandering abroad. He anticipates a little difficulty with his wife; but she is only too happy to let him go, comforting herself with the idea that Athelstane will look after her. So her husband starts on his journey. "Then Ivanhoe's trumpet blew. Then Rowena waved her pocket-handkerchief. Then the household gave a shout. Then the pursuivant of the good knight, Sir Wilfrid the Crusader, flung out his banner—which was argent, a gules cramoisy with three Moors impaled—then Wamba gave a lash on his mule's haunch, and Ivanhoe, heaving a great sigh, turned the tail of his war-horse upon the castle of his fathers."

Ivanhoe finds Cœur de Leon besieging the Castle of Chalons. and there they both do wondrous deeds, Ivanhoe always surpassing the king. The jealousy of the courtiers, the ingratitude of the king, and the melancholy of the knight, who is never comforted except when he has slaughtered some hundreds, are delighted. Roger de Backbite and Peter de Toadhole are intended to be quite real. Then his majesty sings, passing off as his own a song of Charles Lever's. Sir Wilfrid declares the truth, and twits the king with his falsehood, whereupon he has the guitar thrown at his head for his pains. He catches the guitar, however, gracefully in his left hand, and sings his own immortal ballad of *King Canute*—than which Thackeray never did anything better.

"Might I stay the sun above us, good Sir Bishop?" Canute cried;
"Could I bid the silver moon to pause upon her heavenly ride?
If the moon obeys my orders, sure I can command the tide.

Will the advancing waves obey me, Bishop, if I make the sign?"
Said the bishop, bowing lowly: "Land and sea, my lord, are thine."
Canute turned towards the ocean: "Back," he said "thou foaming brine."

But the sullen ocean answered with a louder, deeper roar,
And the rapid waves drew nearer, falling, sounding on the shore;
Back the keeper and the bishop, back the king and courtiers bore.

We must go to the book to look at the picture of the king as he is killing the youngest of the sons of the Count of Chalons. Those illustrations of Doyle's are admirable. The size of the king's head, and the size of his battle-axe as contrasted with the size of the child, are burlesque all over. But the king has been wounded by a bolt from the bow of Sir Bertrand de Gourdon while he is slaughtering the infant, and there is an end of him. Ivanhoe, too, is killed at the siege—Sir Robert de Backbite having stabbed him in the back during the scene. Had he not been then killed, his widow Rowena could not have married Athelstane, which she soon did after hearing the sad news; nor could he have had that celebrated epitaph in Latin and English:

Hic est Guilfridus, belli dum vixit avidus.
Cum gladeo et lancea Normannia et quoque Francia
Verbera dura dabat. Per Turcos multum equitabat.
Guilbertum occidit;—atque Hyerosolyma vidit.
Heu! nunc sub fossa sunt tanti militis ossa.
Uxor Athelstani est conjux castissima Thani.*

The translation, we are told. was by Wamba:

Under the stone you behold,
Buried and coffined and cold,
Lieth Sir Wilfrid the Bold.

Always he marched in advance,
Warring in Flanders and France,
Doughty with sword and with lance.

Famous in Saracen fight,
Rode in his youth, the good Knight,
Scattering Paynims in flight,

Brian, the Templar untrue,
Fairly in tourney he slew;
Saw Hierusalem too.

Now he is buried and gone,
Lying beneath the gray stone.
Where shall you find such a one?

Long time his widow deplored,
Weeping, the fate of her lord,
Sadly cut off by the sword.

When she was eased of her pain,
Came the good lord Athelstane,
When her ladyship married again.

The next chapter begins naturally as follows: "I trust nobody will suppose, from the events described in the last chapter, that our friend Ivanhoe is really dead." He is of course cured of his wounds, though they take six years in the curing. And then he makes his way back to Rotherwood, in a friar's disguise, much as he did on that former occasion when we first met him, and there is

* I doubt that Thackeray did not write the Latin epitaph, but I hardly dare suggest the name of any author. The "vixit avidus" is quite worthy of Thackeray; but had he tried his hand at such mode of expression he would have done more of it. I should like to know whether he had been in company with Father Prout at the time.

received by Athelstane and Rowena—and their boy !—while Wamba sings him a song:

> Then you know the worth of a lass,
> Once you have come to forty year !

No one, of course, but Wamba knows Ivanhoe, who roams about the country, melancholy—as he of course would be—charitable—as he perhaps might be—for we are specially told that he had a large fortune and nothing to do with it, and slaying robbers wherever he met them—but sad at heart all the time. Then there came a little burst of the author's own feelings, while he is burlesquing. "Ah my dear friends and British public, are there not others who are melancholy under a mask of gayety, and who in the midst of crowds are lonely? Liston was a most melancholy man; Grimaldi had feelings; and then others I wot of. But psha!—let us have the next chapter." In all of which there was a touch of earnestness.

Ivanhoe's griefs were enhanced by the wickedness of King John, under whom he would not serve. "It was Sir Wilfrid of Ivanhoe, I need scarcely say, who got the Barons of England to league together and extort from the king that famous instrument and palladium of our liberties, at present in the British Museum, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury—The Magna Charta." Athelstane also quarrels with the king, whose orders he disobeys, and Rotherwood is attacked by the royal army. No one was of real service in the way of fighting except Ivanhoe—and how could he take up that cause? "No; he hanged to me," said the knight, bitterly. "This is a quarrel in which I can't interfere. Common politeness forbids. Let yonder ale-swilling Athelstane defend his—ha, ha!—*wife;* and my Lady Rowena guard her—ha, ha!—*son!*" and he laughed wildly and madly.

But Athelstane is killed—this time in earnest—and then Ivanhoe rushes to the rescue. He finds Gurth dead at the park-lodge; and though he is alone—having outridden his followers—he rushes up the chestnut avenue to the house, which is being attacked. "An Ivanhoe! an Ivanhoe!" he bellowed out with a shout that overcame all the din of battle;—"Notre Dame à la recousse!" and to hurl his lance through the midriff of Reginald de Bracy, who was commanding the assault—who fell howling with anguish—to wave his battle-axe over his own head, and to cut off those thirteen men-at-arms, was the work of an instant. "An Ivanhoe! an Ivanhoe!" he still shouted, and down went a man as sure as he said "hoe!"

Nevertheless he is again killed by multitudes, or very nearly—and has again to be cured by the tender nursing of Wamba. But Athelstane is really dead, and Rowena and the boy have to be found. He does his duty and finds them—just in time to be present at Rowena's death. She has been put in prison by King John, and is in extremis when her first husband gets to her. "Wilfrid, my

early loved," * slowly gasped she, removing her gray hair from her furrowed temples, and gazing on her boy fondly as he nestled on Ivanhoe's knee—"promise me by St. Waltheof of Templestowe—promise me one boon!"

"I do," said Ivanhoe, clasping the boy, and thinking that it was to that little innocent that the promise was intended to apply.

"By St. Waltheof?"

"By St. Waltheof!"

"Promise me, then," gasped Rowena, staring wildly at him, "that you will never marry a Jewess!"

"By St. Waltheof!" cried Ivanhoe, "but this is too much," and he did not make the promise.

"Having placed young Cedric at school at the Hall of Dotheboys, in Yorkshire, and arranged his family affairs, Sir Wilfrid of Ivanhoe quitted a country which had no longer any charm for him, as there was no fighting to be done, and in which his stay was rendered less agreeable by the notion that King John would hang him." So he goes forth and fights again, in league with the Knights of St. John—the Templars naturally having a dislike to him because of Brian de Bois Guilbert. "The only fault that the great and gallant, though severe and ascetic Folko of Heydenbraten, the chief of the Order of St. John, found with the melancholy warrior whose lance did such service to the cause, was that he did not persecute the Jews, as so religious a knight should. So the Jews, in cursing Christains, always excepted the name of the Desdichado—or the double disinherited, as he now was—the Desdichado Doblado." Then came the battle of Alarcos, and the Moors were all but in possession of the whole of Spain. Sir Wilfrid, like other good Christians, cannot endure this, so he takes ship in Bohemia, where he happens to be quartered, and has himself carried to Barcelona, and proceeds "to slaughter the Moors forthwith." Then there is a scene in which Isaac of York comes on as a messenger, to ransom from a Spanish knight, Don Beltram de Cuchilla y Trabuco, y Espada, y Espelon, a little Moorish girl. The Spanish knight of course murders the little girl instead of taking the ransom. Two hundred thousand dirhems are offered, however much that may be; but the knight, who happens to be in funds at the time, prefers to kill the little girl. All this is only necessary to the story as introducing Isaac of York. Sir Wilfrid is of course intent upon finding Rebecca. Through all his troubles and triumphs, from his gaining and his losing of Rowena, from the day on which he had been "*locked up with the Jewess in the tower*," he had always been true to her. "Away from me!" said the old Jew, tottering. "Away, Rebecca is—dead!" Then Ivanhoe goes out and kills fifty thousand Moors, and there is the picture of him—killing them.

But Rebecca is not dead at all. Her father had said so because Rebecca had behaved very badly to him. She had refused to marry

* There is something almost illnatured in his treatment of Rowena, who is very false in her declarations of love:—and it is to be feared that by Rowena the author intends the normal married lady of English society.

the Moorish prince, or any of her own people, the Jews, and had gone as far as to declare her passion for Ivanhoe and her resolution to be a Christian. All the Jews and Jewesses in Valencia turned against her—so that she was locked up in the back-kitchen and almost starved to death. But Ivanhoe found her, of course, and makes her Mrs. Ivanhoe, or Lady Wilfrid the second. Then Thackeray tells us how for many years he, Thackeray, had not ceased to feel that it ought to be so. "Indeed I have thought of it these five-and-twenty years—ever since, as a boy at school, I commenced the noble study of novels—ever since the day when, lying on sunny slopes, of half-holidays, the fair chivalrous figures and beautiful shapes of knights and ladies were visible to me, ever since I grew to love Rebecca, that sweetest creature of the poet's fancy, and longed to see her righted."

And so, no doubt, it had been. The very burlesque had grown from the way in which his young imagination had been moved by Scott's romance. He had felt, from the time of those happy half-holidays in which he had been lucky enough to get hold of the novel, that according to all laws of poetic justice, Rebecca, as being the more beautiful and the more interesting of the heroines, was entitled to the possession of the hero. We have all of us felt the same. But to him had been present at the same time all that is ludicrous in our ideas of middle-age chivalry; the absurdity of its recorded deeds, the bloodthirstiness of its recreations, the selfishness of its men, the falseness of its honour, the cringing of its loyalty, the tyranny of its princes. And so there came forth Rebecca and Rowena, all broad fun from beginning to end, but never without a purpose—the best burlesque, as I think, in our language.

CHAPTER VII.

THACKERAY'S LECTURES.

In speaking of Thackeray's life, I have said why and how it was that he took upon himself to lecture, and have also told the reader that he was altogether successful in carrying out the views proposed to himself. Of his peculiar manner of lecturing I have said but little, never having heard him. "He pounded along—very clearly," I have been told; from which I surmise that there was no special grace of eloquence, but that he was always audible. I cannot imagine that he should have been ever eloquent. He could not have taken the trouble necessary with his voice, with his cadences, or with his outward appearance. I imagine that they who seem so naturally to fall into the proprieties of elocution have generally taken a great deal of trouble beyond that which the mere finding of their words has cost them. It is clearly to the matter of what he then gave the world, and not to the manner, that we must look for what interest is to be found in the lectures.

Those on *The English Humorists* were given first. The second set was on *The Four Georges*. In the volume now before us *The Georges* are printed first, and the whole is produced simply as a part of Thackeray's literary work. Looked at, however, in that light, the merit of the two sets of biographical essays is very different. In the one we have all the anecdotes which could be brought together respecting four of our kings—who as men were not peculiar, though their reigns were, and will always be, famous, because the country during the period was increasing greatly in prosperity, and was ever strengthening the hold it had upon its liberties. In the other set the lecturer was a man of letters dealing with men of letters, and himself a prince among humorists of his own country and language. One could not imagine a better subject for such discourses from Thackeray's mouth than the latter. The former was not, I think, so good.

In discussing the lives of kings the biographer may trust to personal details or to historical facts. He may take the man, and say what good or evil may be said of him as a man;—or he may take the period, and tell his readers what happened to the country while this or the other king was on the throne. In the case with which we are dealing, the lecturer had not time enough or room

enough for real history. His object was to let his audience know of what nature were the men; and we are bound to say that the pictures have not, on the whole, been flattering. It was almost necessary that with such a subject such could be the result. A story of family virtues, with princes and princesses well brought up, with happy family relations, all couleur de rose—as it would of course become us to write if we were dealing with the life of a living sovereign—would not be interesting. No one on going to hear Thackeray lecture on the Georges expected that. There must be some piquancy given, or the lecture would be dull;—and the eulogy of personal virtues can seldom be piquant. It is difficult to speak fittingly of a sovereign, either living or not, long since gone. You can hardly praise such a one without flattery. You can hardly censure him without injustice. We are either ignorant of his personal doings or we know them as secrets, which have been divulged for the most part either falsely or treacherously—often both falsely and treacherously. It is better, perhaps, that we should not deal with the personalities of princes.

I believe that Thackeray fancied that he had spoken well of George III., and am sure that it was his intention to do so. But the impression he leaves is poor. "He is said not to have cared for Shakespeare or tragedy much; farces and pantomimes were his joy;—and especially when clown swallowed a carrot or a string of sausages, he would laugh so outrageously that the lovely princess by his side would have to say, 'My gracious monarch, do compose yourself.' 'George, be a king!' were the words which she"—his mother—"was ever croaking in the ears of her son; and a king the simple, stubborn, affectionate, bigoted man tried to be." "He did his best; he worked according to his lights: what virtues he knew he tried to practise; what knowledge he could master he strove to acquire." If the lectures were to be popular, it was absolutely necessary that they should be written in this strain. A lecture simply laudatory on the life of St. Paul would not draw even the bench of bishops to listen to it; but were a flaw found in the apostle's life, the whole Church of England would be bound to know all about it. I am quite sure that Thackeray believed every word that he said in the lectures, and that he intended to put in the good and the bad, honestly, as they might come to his hand. We may be quite sure that he did not intend to flatter the royal family;—equally sure that he would not calumniate. There were, however, so many difficulties to be encountered that I cannot but think that the subject was ill-chosen. In making them so amusing as he did, and so little offensive, great ingenuity was shown.

I will now go back to the first series, in which the lectures treated of Swift, Congreve, Addison, Steele, Prior, Gay, Pope, Hogarth, Smollett, Fielding, Sterne, and Goldsmith. All these Thackeray has put in their proper order, placing the men from the date of their birth, except Prior, who was in truth the eldest of the lot, but whom it was necessary to depose, in order that the great Swift might stand first on the list, and Smollett, who was not born

till fourteen years after Fielding, eight years after Sterne, and who has been moved up, I presume, simply from caprice. From the birth of the first to the death of the last, was a period of nearly a hundred years. They were never absolutely all alive together; but it was nearly so, Addison and Prior having died before Smollett was born. Whether we should accept as humorists the full catalogue, may be a question; though we shall hardly wish to eliminate any one from such a dozen of names. Pope we should hardly define as a humorist, were we to be seeking for a definition specially fit for him, though we shall certainly not deny the gift of humour to the author of *The Rape of the Lock*, or to the translator of any portion of *The Odyssey*. Nor should we have included Fielding or Smollett, in spite of Parson Adams and Tabitha Bramble, unless anxious to fill a good company. That Hogarth was specially a humorist no one will deny; but in speaking of humorists we should have presumed, unless otherwise notified, that humorists in letters only had been intended. As Thackeray explains clearly that he means by a humorist, I may as well here repeat the passage: "If humour only meant laughter, you would scarcely feel more interest about humorous writers than about the private life of poor Harlequin just mentioned, who possesses in common with these the power of making you laugh. But the men regarding whose lives and stories your kind presence here shows that you have curiosity and sympathy, appeal to a great number of our other faculties, besides our mere sense of ridicule. The humorous writer professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness—your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture—your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. To the best of his means and ability he comments on all the ordinary actions and passions of life almost. He takes upon himself to be the week-day preacher, so to speak. Accordingly, as he finds, and speaks, and feels the truth best, we regard him, esteem him,—sometimes love him. And as his business is to mark other people's lives and peculiarities, we moralise upon *his* life when he is gone—and yesterday's preacher becomes the text for to-day's sermon."

Having thus explained his purpose, Thackeray begins his task, and puts Swift in his front rank as a humorist. The picture given of this great man has very manifestly the look of truth, and if true, is terrible indeed. We do, in fact, know it to be true—even though it be admitted that there is still room left for a book to be written on the life of the fearful dean. Here was a man endued with an intellect pellucid as well as brilliant; who could not only conceive but see also—with some fine instincts too; whom fortune did not flout; whom circumstances fairly served; but who, from first to last, was miserable himself, who made others miserable, and who deserved misery. Our business, during the page or two which we can give to the subject, is not with Swift, but with Thackeray's picture of Swift. It is painted with colours terribly strong and with shadows fearfully deep. "Would you like to have lived with him?" Thackeray asks. Then he says how pleasant it would have

been to have passed some time with Fielding, Johnson, or Goldsmith. "I should like to have been Shakespeare's shoeblack," he says. "But Swift! If you had been his inferior in parts—and that, with a great respect for all persons present, I fear is only very likely—his equal in mere social station, he would have bullied, scorned, and insulted you. If, undeterred by his great reputation, you had met him like a man, he would have quailed before you and not had the pluck to reply—and gone home, and years after written a foul epigram upon you." There is a picture! "If you had been a lord with a blue riband, who flattered his vanity, or could help his ambition, he would have been the most delightful company in the world. . . . How he would have torn your enemies to pieces for you, and made fun of the Opposition! His servility was so boisterous that it looked like independence." He was a man whose mind was never fixed on high things, but was striving always after something which, little as it might be, and successful as he was, should always be out of his reach. It had been his misfortune to become a clergyman, because the way to church preferment seemed to be the readiest. He became, as we all know, a dean—but never a bishop, and was therefore wretched. Thackeray describes him as a clerical highwayman, seizing on all he could get. But "the great prize has not yet come. The coach with the mitre and crozier in it, which he intends to have for *his* share, has been delayed on the way from St. James's; and he waits and waits till nightfall, when his runners come and tell him that the coach has taken a different way and escaped him. So he fires his pistol into the air with a curse, and rides away into his own country;"—or, in other words, takes a poor deanery in Ireland.

Thackeray explains very correctly, as I think, the nature of the weapons which the man used—namely, the words and style with which he wrote. "That Swift was born at No. 7, Hoey's Court, Dublin, on November 30, 1667, is a certain fact, of which nobody will deny the sister-island the honour and glory; but it seems to me he was no more an Irishman than a man born of English parents at Calcutta is a Hindoo. Goldsmith was an Irishman, and always an Irishman; Steele was an Irishman, and always an Irishman; Swift's heart was English and in England, his habits English, his logic eminently English; his statement is elaborately simple; he shuns tropes and metaphors, and uses his ideas and words with a wise thrift and economy, as he used his money;—with which he could be generous and splendid upon great occasions, but which he husbanded when there was no need to spend it. He never indulges in needless extravagance of rhetoric, lavish epithets, profuse imagery. He lays his opinions before you with a grave simplicity and a perfect neatness." This is quite true of him, and the result is that though you may deny him sincerity, simplicity, humanity, or good taste, you can hardly find fault with his language.

Swift was a clergyman, and this is what Thackeray says of him in regard to his sacred profession. "I know of few things more conclusive as to the sincerity of Swift's religion, than his advice to

poor John Gay to turn clergyman, and look out for a seat on the Bench! Gay, the author of *The Beggar's Opera;* Gay, the wildest of the wits about town! It was this man that Jonathan Swift advised to take orders, to mount in a cassock and bands—just as he advised him to husband his shillings, and put his thousand pounds out to interest."

It was not that he was without religion—or without, rather, his religious beliefs and doubts, "for Swift," says Thackeray, "was a reverent, was a pious spirit. For Swift could love and could pray." Left to himself and to the natural thoughts of his mind, without those "orders" to which he had bound himself as a necessary part of his trade, he could have turned to his God with questionings which need not then have been heart breaking. "It is my belief," says Thackeray, "that he suffered frightfully from the consciousness of his own scepticism, and that he had bent his pride so far down as to put his apostasy out to hire." I doubt whether any of Swift's works are very much read now, but perhaps Gulliver's travels are oftener in the hands of modern readers than any other. Of all the satires in our language, it is probably the most cynical, the most absolutely illnatured, and therefore the falsest. Let those who care to form an opinion of Swift's mind from the best known of his works, turn to Thackeray's account of Gulliver. I can imagine no greater proof of misery than to have been able to write such a book as that.

It is thus that the lecturer concludes his lecture about Swift: "He shrank away from all affections sooner or later. Stella and Vanessa both died near him, and away from him. He had not heart enough to see them die. He broke from his fastest friend, Sheridan. He slunk away from his fondest admirer, Pope. His laugh jars on one's ear after seven-score years. He was always alone—alone and gnashing in the darkness, except when Stella's sweet smile came and shone on him. When that went, silence and utter night closed over him. An immense genius, an awful downfall and ruin! So great a man he seems to me, that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling. We have other great names to mention—none, I think, however so great or so gloomy." And so we pass on from Swift, feeling that though the man was certainly a humorist, we have had as yet but little to do with humour.

Congreve is the next who, however truly he may have been a humorist, is described here rather as a man of fashion. A man of fashion he certainly was, but is best known in our literature as a comedian—worshipping that Comic Muse to whom Thackeray hesitates to introduce his audience, because she is not only merry, but shameless also. Congreve's muse was about as bad as any muse that ever misbehaved herself—and I think, as little amusing. "Reading in these plays now," says Thackeray, "is like shutting your ears and looking at people dancing. What does it mean?—the measures, the grimaces, the bowing, shuffling, and retreating, the cavaliers seul advancing upon those ladies—those ladies and

men twirling round at the end in a mad galop, after which everybody bows and the quaint rite is celebrated?" It is always so with Congreve's plays, and Etherege's and Wycherley's. The world we meet there is not our world, and as we read the plays we have no sympathy with these unknown people. It was not that they lived so long ago. They are much nearer to us in time than the men and women who figured on the stage in the reign of James I. But their nature is farther from our nature. They sparkle, but never warm. They are witty, but leave no impression. I might almost go further, and say that they are wicked, but never allure. "When Voltaire came to visit the great Congreve," says Thackeray, "the latter rather affected to despise his literary reputation: and in this, perhaps, the great Congreve was not far wrong. A touch of Steele's tenderness is worth all his finery; a flash of Swift's lightning, a beam of Addison's pure sunshine, and his tawdry playhouse taper is invisible. But the ladies loved him, and he was undoubtedly a pretty fellow."

There is no doubt as to the true humour of Addison, who next comes up before us, but I think that he makes hardly so good a subject for a lecturer as the great gloomy man of intellect, or the frivolous man of pleasure. Thackeray tells us all that is to be said about him as a humorist in so few lines that I may almost insert them on this page: "But it is not for his reputation as the great author of *Cato* and *The Campaign*, or for his merits as Secretary of State, or for his rank and high distinction as Lady Warwick's husband, or for his eminence as an examiner of political questions on the Whig side, or a guardian of British liberties, that we admire Joseph Addison. It is as a Tattler of small talk and a Spectator of mankind that we cherish and love him, and owe as much pleasure to him as to any human being that ever wrote. He came in that artificial age, and began to speak with his noble natural voice. He came the gentle satirist, who hit no unfair blow: the kind judge, who castigated only in smiling. While Swift went about hanging and ruthless, a literary Jeffreys, in Addison's kind court only minor cases were tried;—only peccadilloes and small sins against society, only a dangerous libertinism in tuckers and hoops, or a nuisance in the abuse of beaux canes and snuffboxes." Steele set *The Tatler* a-going. "But with his friend's discovery of *The Tatler*, Addison's calling was found, and the most delightful Tattler in the world began to speak. He does not go very deep. Let gentlemen of a profound genius, critics accustomed to the plunge of the bathos, console themselves by thinking that he couldn't go very deep. There is no trace of suffering in his writing. He was so good, so honest, so healthy, so cheerfully selfish—if I must use the word!"

Such was Addison as a humorist; and when the hearer shall have heard also—or the reader read—that this most charming Tattler also wrote *Cato*, became a Secretary of State, and married a countess, he will have learned all that Thackeray had to tell of him.

Steele was one who stood much less high in the world's esteem, and who left behind him a much smaller name—but was quite Addison's equal as a humorist and a wit. Addison, though he had the reputation of a toper, was respectability itself. Steele was almost always disreputable. He was brought from Ireland, placed at the Charter House, and then transferred to Oxford, where he became acquainted with Addison. Thackeray says that "Steele found Addison a stately college don at Oxford." The stateliness and the don's rank were attributable no doubt to the more sober character of the English lad, for, in fact, the two men were born in the same year, 1672. Steele, who during his life was affected by various different tastes, first turned himself to literature, but early in life was bitten by the hue of a red coat and became a trooper in the Horse Guards. To the end he vacillated in the same way. In that charming paper in *The Tatler*, in which he records his father's death, his mother's griefs, his own most solemn and tender emotions, he says he is interrupted by the arrival of a hamper of wine, 'the same as is to be sold at Garraway's next week;' upon the receipt of which he sends for three friends, and they fall to instantly, drinking two bottles apiece, with great benefit to themselves, and not separating till two o'clock in the morning."

He had two wives, whom he loved dearly and treated badly. He hired grand houses, and bought fine horses for which he could never pay. He was often religious, but more often drunk. As a man of letters, other men of letters who followed him, such as Thackeray, could not be very proud of him. But everybody loved him; and he seems to have been the inventor of that flying literature which, with many changes in form and manner, has done so much for the amusement and edification of readers ever since his time. He was always commencing, or carrying on—often editing—some one of the numerous periodicals which appeared during his time. Thackeray mentions seven: *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, *The Guardian*, *The Englishman*, *The Lover*, *The Reader*, and *The Theatre;* that three of them are well known to this day—the three first named—and are to be found in all libraries, is proof that his life was not thrown away.

I almost question Prior's right to be in the list, unless, indeed, the mastery over well-turned conceits is to be included within the border of humour. But Thackeray had a strong liking for Prior, and in his own humorous way rebukes his audience for not being familiar with *The Town and Country Mouse*. He says that Prior's epigrams have the genuine sparkle, and compares Prior to Horace. "His song, his philosophy, his good sense, his happy, easy turns and melody, his loves, and his epicureanism, bear a great resemblance to that most delightful and accomplished master." I cannot say that I agree with this. Prior is generally neat in his expression. Horace is happy—which is surely a great deal more.

All that is said of Gay, Pope, Hogarth, Smollett, and Fielding is worth reading, and may be of great value both to those who

have not time to study the authors, and to those who desire to have their own judgments somewhat guided, somewhat assisted. That they were all men of humor there can be no doubt. Whether either of them, except perhaps Gay, would have been specially ranked as a humorist among men of letters, may be a question.

Sterne was a humorist, and employed his pen in that line, if ever a writer did so, and so was Goldsmith. Of the excellence and largeness of the disposition of the one, and the meanness and littleness of the other, it is not necessary that I should here say much. But I will give a short passage from our author as to each. He has been quoting somewhat at length from Sterne, and thus he ends: "And with this pretty dance and chorus the volume artfully concludes. Even here one can't give the whole description. There is not a page in Sterne's writing but has something that were better away, a latent corruption—a hint as of an impure presence. Some of that dreary double entendre may be attributed to freer times and manners than ours—but not all. The four satyr's eyes leer out of the leaves constantly. The last words the famous author wrote were bad and wicked. The last lines the poor stricken wretch penned were for pity and pardon." Now a line or two about Goldsmith, and I will then let my reader go to the volume and study the lectures for himself. "The poor fellow was never so friendless but that he could befriend some one; never so pinched and wretched but he could give of his crust, and speak his word of compassion. If he had but his flute left, he would give that, and make the children happy in the dreary London courts."

Of this, too, I will remind my readers—those who have bookshelves well filled to adorn their houses—that Goldsmith stands in the front where all the young people see the volumes. There are few among the young people who do not refresh their sense of humour occasionally from that shelf; Sterne is relegated to some distant and high corner. The less often that he is taken down the better.—Thackeray makes some half excuse for him because of the greater freedom of the times. But "the times" were the same for the two. Both Sterne and Goldsmith wrote in the reign of George II.; both died in the reign of George III.

CHAPTER VIII.

THACKERAY'S BALLADS.

WE have a volume of Thackeray's poms, republished under the name of *Ballads*, which is, I think, to a great extent a misnomer. They are all readable, almost all good, full of humour, and with some fine touches of pathos, most happy in their versification, and, with a few exceptions, hitting well on the head the nail which he intended to hit. But they are not on that account ballads. Literally, a ballad is a song; but it has come to signify a short chronicle in verse, which may be political, or pathetic, or grotesque—or it may have all three characteristics or any two of them; but not on that account is any grotesque poem a ballad—nor, of course, any pathetic or any political poem. *Jacob Omnium's Hoss* may fairly be called a ballad, containing as it does a chronicle of a well-defined transaction; and the story of *King Canute* is a ballad—one of the best that has been produced in our language in modern years. But such pieces as those called *The End of the Play* and *Vanitas Vanitatum*, which are didactic as well as pathetic, are not ballads in the common sense; nor are such songs as *The Mahogany Tree*, or the little collection called *Love Songs made Easy*. The majority of the pieces are not ballads; but if they be good of the kind, we should be ungrateful to quarrel much with the name.

How very good most of them are, I did not know till I re-read them for the purpose of writing this chapter. There is a manifest falling off in some few—which has come from that source of literary failure which is now so common. If a man write a book or a poem because it is in him to write it—the motive power being altogether in himself, and coming from his desire to express himself—he will write it well, presuming him to be capable of the effort. But if he write his book or poem simply because a book or poem is required from him, let his capability be what it may, it is not unlikely that he will do it badly. Thackeray occasionally suffered from the weakness thus produced. A ballad from *Policeman X—Bow Street Ballads* they were first called—was required by *Punch*, and had to be forthcoming, whatever might be the poet's humour, by a certain time. *Jacob Omnium's Hoss* is excellent. His heart and feeling were all there, on behalf of his friend, and against that obsolete old court of justice. But we can tell well when he was looking through

the police reports for a subject, and taking what chance might send him, without any special interest in the matter. *The Knight and the Lady of Bath*, and the *Damages Two Hundred Pounds*, as they were demanded at Guildford, taste as though they were written to order.

Here, in his verses as in his prose, the charm of Thackeray's work lies in the mingling of humour with pathos and indignation. There is hardly a piece that is not more or less funny, hardly a piece that is not satirical;—and in most of them, for those who will look a little below the surface, there is something that will touch them. Thackeray, though he rarely uttered a word, either with his pen or his mouth, in which there was not an intention to reach our sense of humour, never was only funny. When he was most determined to make us laugh, he had always a further purpose; some pity was to be extracted from us on behalf of the sorrows of men, or some indignation at the evil done by them.

This is the beginning of that story as to the *Two Hundred Pounds*, for which, as a ballad, I do not care very much:

> Special jurymen of England who admire your country's laws,
> And proclaim a British jury worthy of the nation's applause,
> Gaily compliment each other at the issue of a cause,
> Which was tried at Guildford 'sizes, this day week as ever was.

Here he is indignant, not only in regard to some miscarriage of justice on that special occasion, but at the general unfitness of jurymen for the work confided to them. "Gaily compliment yourselves," he says, "on your beautiful constitution, from which come such beautiful results as those I am going to tell you!" When he reminded us that Ivanhoe had produced Magna Charta, there was a purpose of irony even there in regard to our vaunted freedom. With all your Magna Charta and your juries, what are you but snobs! There is nothing so often misguided as general indignation, and I think that in his judgment of outside things, in the measure which he usually took of them, Thackeray was very frequently misguided. A satirist by trade will learn to satirise everything, till the light of the sun and the moon's loveliness will become evil and mean to him. I think that he was mistaken in his views of things. But we have to do with him as a writer, not as a political economist or a politician. His indignation was all true, and the expression of it was often perfect. The lines in which he addresses that Pallis Court, at the end of *Jacob Omnium's Hoss*, are almost sublime.

> O Pallis Court, you move
> My pity most profound.
> A most amusing sport
> You thought it, I'll be bound,
> To saddle hup a three-pound debt,
> With two-and-twenty pound.
>
> Good sport it is to you
> To grind the honest poor,
> To pay their just or unjust debts
> With eight hundred per cent., for Lor;
> Make haste and get your costes in,
> They will not last much mor!

Come down from that tribewn,
Thou shameless and unjust;
Thou swindle, picking pockets in
The name of Truth august;
Come down, thou hoary Blasphemy,
For die thou shalt and must.

And go it, Jacob Homnium,
And ply your iron pen,
And rise up, Sir John Jervis,
And shut me up that den;
That sty for fattening lawyers in,
On the bones of honest men.

"Come down from that tribewn, thou shameless and unjust!" It is impossible not to feel that he felt this as he wrote it.

There is a branch of his poetry which he calls—or which at any rate is now called, *Lyra Hybernica*, for which no doubt *The Groves of Blarney* was his model. There have been many imitations since, of which perhaps Barham's ballad on the coronation was the best, "When to Westminster the Royal Spinster and the Duke of Leinster all in order did repair!" Thackeray, in some of his attempts, has been equally droll and equally graphic. That on *The Cristal Palace*—not that at Sydenham, but its forerunner, the palace of the Great Exhibition—is very good, as the following catalogue of its contents will show t

There's holy saints
And window paints,
By Maydiayval Pugin;
Alhamborough Jones
Did paint the tones
Of yellow and gambouge in.

There's fountains there
And crosses fair;
There's water-gods with urns;
There's organs three,
To play, d'ye see?
"God save the Queen," by turns.

There's statues bright
Of marble white,
Of silver, and of copper;
And some in zinc,
And some, I think,
That isn't over proper.

There's staym ingynes,
That stands in lines,
Enormous and amazing,
That squeal and snort
Like whales in sport,
Or elephants a grazing.

There's carts and gigs,
And pins for pigs,
There's dibblers and there's harrows,
And ploughs like toys
For little boys,
And ilegant wheel-barrows.

For thim genteels
Who ride on wheels,
There's plenty to indulge 'em;
There's droskys snug
From Paytersbug,
And vayhycles from Bulgium.

There's cabs on stands
And shandthry danns;
There's waggons from New York here:
There's Lapland sleighs
Have crossed the seas,
And jaunting cyars from Cork here.

In writing this Thackeray was a little late with his copy for *Punch;* not, we should say, altogether an uncommon accident to him. It should have been with the editor early on Saturday, if not before, but did not come till late on Saturday evening. The editor, who was among men the most good-natured, and I should think the most forbearing, either could not, or in this case would not, insert it in the next week's issue, and Thackeray, angry and

disgusted, sent it to *The Times*. In *The Times* of next Monday it appeared—very much, I should think, to the delight of the readers of that august newspaper.

Mr. Molony's account of the ball given to the Nepaulese ambassadors by the Peninsular and Oriental Company, is so like Barham's coronation in the account it gives of the guests, that one would fancy it must be by the same hand.

The noble Chair * stud at the stair
  And bade the dhrums to thump; and he
Did thus evince to that Black Prince
  The welcome of his Company.†

O fair the girls and rich the curls,
  And bright the oys you saw there was;
And fixed each oye you then could spoi
  On General Jung Bahawther was!

This gineral great then tuck his sate,
  With all the other ginerals,
Bedad his troat, his belt, his coat,
  All bleezed with precious minerals:
And as he there, with princely air,
  Recloinin on his cushion was,
All round about his royal chair
  The squeezin and the pushin was.

O Pat, such girls, such jukes and earls,
  Such fashion and nobilitee!
Just think of Tim, and fancy him
  Amidst the high gentilitee!
There was the Lord de L'Huys, and the Portygeese
  Ministher and his lady there,
And I recognised, with much surprise,
  Our messmate, Bob O'Grady, there.

All these are very good fun—so good in humour and so good in expression, that it would be needless to criticise their peculiar dialect, were it not that Thackeray has made for himself a reputation by his writing of Irish. In this he has been so entirely successful that for many English readers he has established a new language which may not improperly be called Hybernico-Thackerayan. If comedy is to be got from peculiarities of dialect, as no doubt it is, one form will do as well as another, so long as those who read it know better. So it has been with Thackeray's Irish, for in truth he was not familiar with the modes of pronunciation which make up Irish brogue. Therefore, though he is always droll, he is not true to nature. Many an Irishman coming to London, not unnaturally tries to imitate the talk of Londoners. You or I, reader, were we from the West, and were the dear County

* Chair—*i. e.*, Chairman. † *I. e.*, The P. and O Company.

Galway to send either of us to Parliament, would probably endeavour to drop the dear brogue of our country, and in doing so we should make some mistakes. It was these mistakes which Thackeray took for the natural Irish tone. He was amused to hear a major called "Meejor," but was unaware that the sound arose from Pat's affection of English softness of speech. The expression natural to the unadulterated Irishman would rather be "Ma-ajor." He discovers his own provincialism, and trying to be polite and urbane, he says "Meejor." In one of the lines I have quoted there occurs the word "troat." Such a sound never came naturally from the mouth of an Irishman. He puts in an h instead of omitting it, and says "dhrink." He comes to London, and finding out that he is wrong with his "dhrink," he leaves out all the h's he can, and thus comes to "troat." It is this which Thackeray has heard. There is a little piece called the *Last Irish Grievance*, to which Thackeray adds a still later grievance, by the false sounds which he elicits from the calumniated mouth of the pretended Irish poet. Slaves are "sleeves," places are "pleeces," Lord John is "Lard Jahn," fatal is "fetal," danger is "deenger," and native is "neetive." All these are unintended slanders. Tea, Hibernicé, is "tay," please is "plaise," sea is "say," and ease is "aise." The softer sound of e is broadened out by the natural Irishman—not, to my ear, without a certain euphony; but no one in Ireland says or hears the reverse. The Irishman who in London might talk of his "neetive" race, would be mincing his words to please the ear of the cockney.

The Chronicle of the Drum would be a true ballad all through, were it not that there is tacked on to it a long moral in an altered metre. I do not much value the moral, but the ballad is excellent, not only in much of its versification and in the turns of its language, but in the quaint and true picture it gives of the French nation. The drummer, either by himself or by some of his family, has drummed through a century of French battling, caring much for his country and his glory, but understanding nothing of the causes for which he is enthusiastic. Whether for King, Republic, or Emperor, whether fighting and conquering or fighting and conquered, he is happy as long as he can beat his drum on a field of glory. But throughout his adventures there is a touch of chivalry about our drummer. In all the episodes of his country's career he feels much of patriotism and something of tenderness. It is thus he sings during the days of the Revolution:

We had taken the head of King Capet,
  We called for the blood of his wife;
Undaunted she came to the scaffold,
  And bared her fair neck to the knife.
As she felt the foul fingers that touched her,
  She shrank, but she deigned not to speak·
She looked with a royal disdain,
  And died with a blush on her cheek!

'Twas thus that our country was saved!
  So told us the Safety Committee!
But, psha, I've the heart of a soldier—
  All gentleness, mercy, and pity.
I loathed to assist at such deeds,
  And my drum beat its loudest of tunes,
As we offered to justice offended,
  The blood of the bloody tribunes.

Away with such foul recollections!
  No more of the axe and the block.
I saw the last fight of the sections,
  As they fell 'neath our guns at St. Rock.
Young Bonaparte led us that day.

And so it goes on. I will not continue the stanza, because it contains the worst rhyme that Thackeray ever permitted himself to use. *The Chronicle of the Drum* has not the finish which he achieved afterwards, but it is full of national feeling, and carries on its purpose to the end with an admirable persistency:

A curse on those British assassins
  Who ordered the slaughter of Ney;
A curse on Sir Hudson who tortured
  The life of our hero away.
A curse on all Russians—I hate them;
  On all Prussian and Austrian fry;
And, oh, but I pray we may meet them
  And fight them again ere I die.

The White Squall—which I can hardly call a ballad, unless any description of a scene in verse may be included in the name—is surely one of the most graphic descriptions ever put into verse. Nothing written by Thackeray shows more plainly his power over words and rhymes. He draws his picture without a line omitted or a line too much, saying with apparent facility all that he has to say, and so saying it that every word conveys its natural meaning.

When a squall, upon a sudden,
Came o'er the waters scudding;
And the clouds began to gather,
And the sea was lashed to lather,
And the lowering thunder grumbled,
And the lightning jumped and tumbled,
And the ship and all the ocean
Woke up in wild commotion.
Then the wind set up a howling,
And the poodle-dog a yowling,
And the cocks began a crowing,
And the old cow raised a lowing,
As she heard the tempest blowing
And fowls and geese did cackle,
And the cordage and the tackle

Began to shriek and crackle;
And the spray dashed o'er the funnels,
And down the deck in runnels;
And the rushing water soaks all,
From the seamen in the fo'ksal
To the stokers whose black faces
Peer out of their bed-places;
And the captain, he was bawling,
And the sailors pulling, hauling,
And the quarter-deck tarpauling
Was shivered in the squalling;
And the passengers awaken,
Most pitifully shaken;
And the steward jumps up and hastens
For the necessary basins.

Then the Greeks they groaned and quivered,
And they knelt, and moaned, and shivered,
As the plunging waters met them,
And splashed and overset them;
And they call in their emergence
Upon countless saints and virgins;
And their marrowbones are bended,
And they think the world is ended.
And the Turkish women for'ard
Were frightened and behorror'rd;
And shrieking and bewildering,
The mothers clutched their children;
The men sang "Allah! Illah!
Mashallah Bis-millah!"
As the warning waters doused them,
And splashed them and soused them;
And they called upon the Prophet,
And thought but little of it.

Then all the fleas in Jewry
Jumped up and bit like fury;
And the progeny of Jacob
Did on the main-deck wake up.
(I wot these greasy Rabbins
Would never pay for cabins);
And each man moaned and jabbered in
His filthy Jewish gaberdine,
In woe and lamentation,
And howling consternation.
And the splashing water drenches
Their dirty brats and wenches;
And they crawl from bales and benches,
In a hundred thousand stenches.
This was the White Squall famous,
Which latterly o'ercame us.

Peg of Limavaddy has always been very popular, and the public have not, I think, been generally aware that the young lady in

question lived in truth at Newton Limavady (with one d). But with the correct name Thackeray would hardly have been so successful with his rhymes.

Citizen or Squire
  Tory, Whig, or Radi-
Cal would all desire
  Peg of Limavaddy.
Had I Homer's fire
  Or that of Sergeant Taddy
Meetly I'd admire
  Peg of Limavaddy.
And till I expire
  Or till I go mad I
Will sing unto my lyre
  Peg of Limavaddy.

The Cane-bottomed Chair is another, better, I think, than *Peg of Limavaddy*, as containing that mixture of burlesque with the pathetic which belonged so peculiarly to Thackeray, and which was indeed the very essence of his genius.

But of all the cheap treasures that garnish my nest,
  There's one that I love and I cherish the best.
For the finest of couches that's padded with hair
  I never would change thee, my cane-bottomed chair.

'Tis a bandy-legged, high-bottomed, worm-eaten seat,
  With a creaking old back and twisted old feet;
But since the fair morning when Fanny sat there.
  I bless thee and love thee, old cane-bottomed chair.

* * * * *

She comes from the past and revisits my room,
  She looks as she then did, all beauty and bloom;
So smiling and tender, so fresh and so fair,
  And yonder she sits in my cane-bottomed chair.

This, in the volume which I have now before me, is followed by a picture of Fanny in the chair, to which I cannot but take exception. I am quite sure that when Fanny graced the room and seated herself in the chair of her old bachelor friend, she had not on a low dress and loosely-flowing drawing-room shawl, nor was there a footstool ready for her feet. I doubt also the headgear. Fanny on that occasion was dressed in her morning apparel, and had walked through the streets, carried no fan, and wore no brooch but one that might be necessary for pinning her shawl.

The Great Cossack Epic is the longest of the ballads. It is a legend of St. Sophia of Kioff, telling how Father Hyacinth, by the aid of St. Sophia, whose wooden statue he carried with him, escaped across the Borysthenes with all the Cossacks at his tail. It is very good fun, but not equal to many of the others. Nor is the

Carmen Lilliense quite to my taste. I should not have declared at once that it had come from Thackeray's hand, had I not known it.

But who could doubt the *Bouillabaisse?* Who else could have written that? Who at the same moment could have been so merry and so melancholy—could have gone so deep into the regrets of life, with words so appropriate to its jollities? I do not know how far my readers will agree with me that to read it always must be a fresh pleasure; but in order that they may agree with me, if they can, I will give it to them entire. If there be one whom it does not please, he will like nothing that Thackeray ever wrote in verse.

THE BALLAD OF BOUILLABAISSE.

A street there is in Paris famous,
  For which no rhyme our language yields,
Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is—
  The New Street of the Little Fields;
And here's an inn, not rich and splendid,
  But still in comfortable case;
The which in youth I oft attended,
  To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

This Bouillabaise a noble dish is—
  A sort of soup, or broth, or brew,
Or hotch-potch of all sorts of fishes,
  That Greenwich never could outdo;
Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,
  Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace:
All these you eat at Terré's tavern,
  In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

Indeed, a rich and savoury stew 'tis;
  And true philosophers, methinks,
Who love all sorts of natural beauties,
  Should love good victuals and good drinks.
And Cordelier or Benedictine
  Might gladly sure his lot embrace,
Nor find a fast-day too afflicting
  Which served him up a Bouillabaisse.

I wonder if the house still there is?
  Yes, here the lamp is, as before;
The smiling red-cheeked écaillère is
  Still opening oysters at the door.
Is Terré still alive and able?
  I recollect his drole grimace;
He'd come and smile before your table,
  And hope you liked your Bouillabaisse.

We enter—nothing's changed or older.
  "How's Monsieur Terré, waiter, pray?"
The waiter stares and shrugs his shoulder—
  "Monsieur is dead this many a day."

"It is the lot of saint and sinner;
So honest Terré's run his race."
"What will Monsieur require for dinner?"
"Say, do you still cook Bouillabaisse!"

"Oh, oui, Monsieur," 's the waiter's answer,
"Quel vin Monsieur desire-t-il?"
"Tell me a good one." "That I can, sir:
The chambertin with yellow seal."
"So Terré's gone," I say, and sink in
My old accustom'd corner-place;
"He's done with feasting and with drinking,
With Burgundy and Bouillabaisse."

My old accustomed corner here is,
The table still is in the nook;
Ah! vanish'd many a busy year is
This well-known chair since last I took.
When first I saw ye cari luoghi,
I'd scarce a beard upon my face,
And now a grizzled, grim old fogy,
I sit and wait for Bouillabaisse.

Where are you, old companions trusty,
Of early days here met to dine?
Come, waiter! quick, a flagon crusty;
I'll pledge them in the good old wine.
The kind old voices and old faces
My memory can quick retrace;
Around the board they take their places,
And share the wine and Bouillabaisse.

There's Jack has made a wondrous marriage;
There's laughing Tom is laughing yet;
There's brave Augustus drives his carriage;
There's poor old Fred in the *Cazette;*
O'er James's head the grass is growing.
Good Lord! the world has wagged apace
Since here we set the claret flowing,
And drank, and ate the Bouillabaisse.

Ah me! how quick the days are flitting!
I mind me of a time that's gone,
When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
In this same place,—but not alone.
A fair young face was nestled near me,
A dear, dear face looked fondly up,
And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me!
There's no one now to share my cup.

* * * * *

I drink it as the Fates ordain it.
Come fill it, and have done with rhymes
Fill up the lonely glass, and drain it
In memory of dear old times.

Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is;
And sit you down and say your grace
With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is.
Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse.

I am not disposed to say that Thackeray will hold a high place among English poets. He would have been the first to ridicule such an assumption made on his behalf. But I think that his verses will be more popular than those of many highly reputed poets, and that as years roll on they will gain rather than lose in public estimation.

CHAPTER IX.

THACKERAY'S STYLE AND MANNER OF WORK.

A NOVEL in style should be easy, lucid, and of course grammatical. The same may be said of any book; but that which is intended to recreate should be easily understood—for which purpose lucid narration is an essential. In matter it should be moral and amusing. In manner it may be realistic, or sublime, or ludicrous; or it may be all these if the author can combine them. As to Thackeray's performance in style and matter I will say something further on. His manner was mainly realistic, and I will therefore speak first of that mode of expression which was peculiarly his own.

Realism in style has not all the ease which seems to belong to it. It is the object of the author that affects it so to communicate with his reader that all his words shall seem to be natural to the occasion. We do not think the language of Dogberry natural, when he tells neighbour Seacole that "to write and read comes by nature." That is ludicrous. Nor is the language of Hamlet natural when he shows to his mother the portrait of his father:

> See what a grace was seated on this brow;
> Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
> An eye like Mars, to threaten and command.

That is sublime. Constance is natural when she turns away from the Cardinal, declaring that

> He talks to me that never had a son.

In one respect both the sublime and ludicrous are easier than the realistic. They are not required to be true. A man with an imagination and culture may feign either of them without knowing the ways of men. To be realistic you must know accurately that which you describe. How often do we find in novels that the author makes an attempt at realism and falls into a bathos of absurdity, because he cannot use appropriate language? "No human being ever spoke like that," we say to ourselves—while we should not question the naturalness of the production, either in the grand or the ridiculous.

And yet in very truth the realistic must not be true—but just so far removed from truth as to suit the erroneous idea of truth which the reader may be supposed to entertain. For were a novelist to narrate a conversation between two persons of fair but not high education, and to use the ill-arranged words and fragments of speech which are really common in such conversations, he would seem to have sunk to the ludicrous, and to be attributing to the interlocutors a mode of language much beneath them. Though in fact true it would seem to be far from natural. But, on the other hand, were he to put words grammatically correct in the mouths of his personages, and to round off and to complete the spoken sentences, the ordinary reader would instantly feel such a style to be stilted and unreal. This reader would not analyse it, but would in some dim but sufficiently critical manner be aware that his author was not providing him with a naturally spoken dialogue. To produce the desired effect the narrator must go between the two. He must mount somewhat above the ordinary conversational powers of such persons as are to be represented—lest he disgust. but he must by no means soar into correct phraseology—lest he offend. The realistic—by which we mean that which shall seem to be real—lies between the two, and in reaching it the writer has not only to keep his proper distance on both sides, but has to maintain varying distances in accordance with the position, mode of life, and education of the speakers. Lady Castlewood in *Esmond* would have been properly made to speak with absolute precision; but she goes nearer to the mark than her more ignorant lord, the viscount; less near, however, than her better-educated kinsman, Henry Esmond. He, however, is not made to speak altogether by the card, or he would be unnatural. Nor would each of them speak always in the same strain, but they would alter their language according to their companion—according even to the hour of the day. All this the reader unconsciously perceives, and will not think the language to be natural unless the proper variations be there.

In simple narrative the rule is the same as in dialogue, though it does not admit of the same palpable deviation from correct construction. The story of any incident, to be realistic, will admit neither of sesquipedalian grandeur nor of grotesque images. The one gives an idea of romance and the other of burlesque, to neither of which is truth supposed to appertain. We desire to soar frequently, and then we try romance. We desire to recreate ourselves with the easy and droll. Dulce est desipere in loco. Then we have recourse to burlesque. But in neither do we expect human nature.

I cannot but think that in the hands of the novelist the middle course is the most powerful. Much as we may delight in burlesque, we cannot claim for it the power of achieving great results. So much, I think, will be granted. For the sublime we look rather to poetry than to prose; and though I will give one or two instances just now in which it has been used with great effect in prose fiction,

it does not come home to the heart, teaching a lesson, as does the realistic. The girl who reads is touched by Lucy Ashton, but she feels herself to be convinced of the facts as to Jeanie Deans, and asks herself whether she might not emulate them.

Now as to the realism of Thackeray, I must rather appeal to my readers than attempt to prove it by quotation. Whoever it is that speaks in his pages, does it not seem that such a person would certainly have used such words on such an occasion? If there be need of examination to learn whether it be so or not, let the reader study all that falls from the mouth of Lady Castlewood through the novel called *Esmond*, or all that falls from the mouth of Beatrix. They are persons peculiarly situated—noble women, but who have still lived much out of the world. The former is always conscious of a sorrow; the latter is always striving after an effect—and both on this account are difficult of management. A period for the story has been chosen which is strange and unknown to us, and which has required a peculiar language. One would have said beforehand that whatever might be the charms of the book, it would not be natural. And yet the ear is never wounded by a tone that is false. It is not always the case that in novel reading the ear should be wounded because the words spoken are unnatural. Bulwer does not wound, though he never puts into the mouth of any of his persons words such as would have been spoken. They are not expected from him. It is something else that he provides. From Thackeray they are expected—and from many others. But Thackeray never disappoints. Whether it be a great duke, such as he who was to have married Beatrix, or a mean chaplain, such as Tusher, or Captain Steele the humorist, they talk—not as they would have talked probably, of which I am no judge—but as we feel that they might have talked. We find ourselves willing to take it as proved because it is there, which is the strongest possible evidence of the realistic capacity of the writer.

As to the sublime in novels, it is not to be supposed that any very high rank of sublimity is required to put such works within the pale of that definition. I allude to those in which an attempt is made to soar above the ordinary actions and ordinary language of life. We may take as an instance *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* That is intended to be sublime throughout. Even the writer never for a moment thought of descending to real life. She must have been untrue to her own idea of her own business had she done so. It is all stilted—all at a certain altitude among the clouds. It has been in its time a popular book, and has had its world of readers. Those readers no doubt preferred the diluted romance of Mrs. Radcliff to the condensed realism of Fielding. At any rate, they did not look for realism. *Pelham* may be taken as another instance of the sublime, though there is so much in it that is of the world worldly, though an intentional fall to the ludicrous is often made in it. The personages talk in glittering dialogues, throwing about philosophy, science, and the classics, in a manner which is always suggestive and often amusing. The book is brilliant with intellect.

But no word is ever spoken as it would have been spoken—no detail is ever narrated as it would have occurred. Bulwer no doubt regarded novels as romantic, and would have looked with contempt on any junction of realism and romance, though, in varying his work, he did not think it beneath him to vary his sublimity with the ludicrous. The sublime in novels is no doubt most effective when it breaks out, as though by some burst of nature, in the midst of a story true to life. "If," said Evan Maccombich, "the Saxon gentlemen are laughing because a poor man such as me thinks my life, or the life of six of my degree, is worth that of Vich Ian Vohr, it's like enough they may be very right; but if they laugh because they think I would not keep my word and come back to redeem him, I can tell them they ken neither the heart of a Hielandman nor the honour of a gentleman." That is sublime. And, again, when Balfour of Burley slaughters Bothwell, the death scene is sublime. "Die, bloodthirsty dog!" said Burley. "Die as thou hast lived! Die like the beasts that perish—hoping nothing, believing nothing!"—"And fearing nothing," said Bothwell. Horrible as is the picture, it is sublime. As is also that speech of Meg Merrilies, as she addresses Mr. Bertram, standing on the bank. "Ride your ways," said the gipsy; "ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan; ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram. This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths; see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the blyther for that. Ye have riven the thack off seven cottar houses; look if your ain roof-tree stand the faster. Ye may stable your stirks in the shealings at Derncleugh; see that the hare does not couch on the hearthstane at Ellangowan." That is romance, and reaches the very height of the sublime. That does not offend, impossible though it be that any old woman should have spoken such words, because it does in truth lift the reader up among the bright stars. It is thus that the sublime may be mingled with the realistic, if the writer has the power. Thackeray also rises in that way to a high pitch, though not in many instances. Romance does not often justify to him an absence of truth. The scene between Lady Castlewood and the Duke of Hamilton is one when she explains to her child's suitor who Henry Esmond is. "My daughter may receive presents from the head of our house," says the lady, speaking up for her kinsman. "My daughter may thankfully take kindness from her father's, her mother's, her brother's dearest friend." The whole scene is of the same nature, and is evidence of Thackeray's capacity for the sublime. And again, when the same lady welcomes the same kinsman on his return from the wars, she rises as high. But as I have already quoted a part of the passage in the chapter on this novel I will not repeat it here.

It may perhaps be said of the sublime in novels—which I have endeavoured to describe as not being generally of a high order—that it is apt to become cold, stilted, and unsatisfactory. What may be done by impossible castles among impossible mountains, peopled by impossible heroes and heroines, and fraught with im-

possible horrors, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* have shown us. But they require a patient reader, and one who can content himself with a long protracted and most unemotional excitement. The sublimity which is effected by sparkling speeches is better, if the speeches really have something in them beneath the sparkles. Those of Bulwer generally have. Those of his imitators are often without anything, the sparkles even hardly sparkling. At the best they fatigue; and a novel, if it fatigues, is unpardonable. Its only excuse is to be found in the amusement it affords. It should instruct also, no doubt, but it never will do so unless it hides its instruction and amuses. Scott understood all this, when he allowed himself only such sudden bursts as I have described. Even in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, which I do not regard as among the best of his performances, as he soars high into the sublime, so does he descend low into the ludicrous.

In this latter division of pure fiction—the burlesque, as it is commonly called, or the ludicrous—Thackeray is quite as much at home as in the realistic, though, the vehicle being less powerful, he has achieved smaller results by it. Manifest as are the objects in his view when he wrote *The Hoggarty Diamond* or *The Legend of the Rhine*, they were less important and less evidently effected than those attempted by *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*. Captain Shindy, the Snob, does not tell us so plainly what is not a gentleman as does Colonel Newcome what is. Nevertheless, the ludicrous has, with Thackeray, been very powerful and very delightful.

In trying to describe what is done by literature of this class, it is especially necessary to remember that different readers are affected in a different way. That which is one man's meat is another man's poison. In the sublime, when the really grand has been reached, it is the reader's own fault if he be not touched. We know that many are indifferent to the soliloquies of Hamlet, but we do not hesitate to declare to ourselves that they are so because they lack the power of appreciating grand language. We do not scruple to attribute to those who are indifferent some inferiority of intelligence. And in regard to the realistic, when the truth of a well-told story or life-like character does not come home, we think that then, too, there is deficiency in the critical ability. But there is nothing necessarily lacking to a man because he does not enjoy *The Heathen Chinee* or *The Biglow Papers;* and the man to whom these delights of American humour are leather and prunello may be of all the most enraptured by the wit of Sam Weller or the mock piety of Pecksniff. It is a matter of taste and not of intellect, as one man likes caviare after his dinner, while another prefers apple-pie; and the man himself cannot, or, as far as we can see, does not, direct his own taste in the one matter more than in the other.

Therefore I cannot ask others to share with me the delight which I have in the various and peculiar expressions of the ludicrous which are common to Thackeray. Some considerable portion of it consists in bad spelling. We may say that Charles James Harrington Fitzroy Yellowplush, or C. FitzJeames De La Pluche,

as he is afterwards called, would be nothing but for his "orthography so carefully inaccuwate." As I have before said, Mrs. Malaprop had seemed to have reached the height of this humour, and in having done so to have made any repetition unpalatable. But Thackeray's studied blundering is altogether different from that of Sheridan. Mrs. Malaprop uses her words in a delightfully wrong sense. Yellowplush would be a very intelligible, if not quite an accurate writer, had he not made for himself special forms of English words altogether new to the eye.

"My ma wrapped up my buth in a mistry. I may be illygitmit; I may have been changed at nus; but I've always had gen'l'm'nly tastes through life, and have no doubt that I come of a gen'l'm'nly origum." We cannot admit that there is wit, or even humour, in bad spelling alone. Were it not that Yellowplush, with his bad spelling, had so much to say for himself, there would be nothing in it; but there is always a sting of satire directed against some real vice, or some growing vulgarity, which is made sharper by the absurdity of the language. In *The Diary of George IV.* there are the following reflections on a certain correspondence:—"Wooden you phansy, now, that the author of such a letter, instead of writun about pipple of tip-top quality, was describin' Vinegar Yard? Would you beleave that the lady he was a-ritin' to was a chased modist lady of honour and mother of a family? *O trumpery! o morris!* as Homer says. This is a higeous pictur of manners, such as I weap to think of, as every morl man must weap." We do not wonder that when he makes his "ajew" he should have been called up to be congratulated on the score of his literary performances by his master, before the Duke, and Lord Bagwig, and Dr. Larner, and "Sawedwadgeorgeearllittnbulwig." All that Yellowplush says or writes are among the pearls which Thackeray was continually scattering abroad.

But this of the distinguished footman was only one of the forms of the ludicrous which he was accustomed to use in the furtherance of some purpose which he had at heart. It was his practice to clothe things most revolting with an assumed grace and dignity, and to add to the weight of his condemnation by the astounding mendacity of the parody thus drawn. There was a grim humour in this which has been displeasing to some, as seeming to hold out to vice a hand which has appeared for too long a time to be friendly. As we are disposed to be not altogether sympathetic with a detective policeman who shall have spent a jolly night with a delinquent, for the sake of tracing home the suspected guilt to his late comrade, so are some disposed to be almost angry with our author, who seems to be too much at home with his rascals, and to live with them on familiar terms till we doubt whether he does not forget their rascality. *Barry Lyndon* is the strongest example we have of this style of the ludicrous, and the critics of whom I speak have thought that our friendly relations with Barry have been too genial, too apparently genuine, so that it might almost be doubtful whether during the narrative we might not, at this or the other crisis, be rather

with him than against him. "After all," the reader might say, on coming to that passage in which Barry defends his trade as a gambler—a passage which I have quoted in speaking of the novel—"after all, this man is more hero than scoundrel;" so well is the burlesque humour maintained, so well does the scoundrel hide his own villany. I can easily understand that to some it should seem too long drawn out. To me it seems to be the perfection of humour—and of philosophy. If such a one us Barry Lyndon, a man full of intellect, can be made thus to love and cherish his vice, and to believe in its beauty, how much more necessary is it to avoid the footsteps which lead to it? But, as I have said above, there is no standard by which to judge of the excellence of the ludicrous as there is of the sublime, and even the realistic.

No writer ever had a stronger proclivity towards parody than Thackeray; and we may, I think, confess that there is no form of literary drollery more dangerous. The parody will often mar the gem of which it coarsely reproduces the outward semblance. The word "damaged," used instead of "damask," has destroyed to my ear for ever the music of one of the sweetest passages in Shakespeare. But it must be acknowledged of Thackeray that, fond as he is of this branch of humour, he has done little or no injury by his parodies. They run over with fun, but are so contrived that they do not lessen the flavour of the original. I have given in one of the preceding chapters a little set of verses of his own called *The Willow Tree*, and his own parody on his own work. There the reader may see how effective a parody may be in destroying the sentiment of the piece parodied. But in dealing with other authors he has been grotesque without being severely critical, and has been very like, without making ugly or distasteful that which he has imitated. No one who has admired *Coningsby* will admire it the less because of *Codlingsby*. Nor will the undoubted romance of *Eugene Aram* be lessened in the estimation of any reader of novels by the well-told career of *George de Barnwell*. One may say that to laugh *Ivanhoe* out of face, or to lessen the glory of that immortal story, would be beyond the power of any farcical effect. Thackeray, in his *Rowena and Rebecca*, certainly had no such purpose. Nothing of *Ivanhoe* is injured, nothing made less valuable than it was before, yet, of all prose parodies in the language, it is perhaps the most perfect. Every character is maintained, every incident has a taste of Scott. It has the twang of *Ivanhoe* from beginning to end, and yet there is not a word in it by which the author of *Ivanhoe* could have been offended. But then there is the purpose beyond that of the mere parody. Prudish women have to be laughed at, and despotic kings, and parasite lords and bishops. The ludicrous alone is but poor fun; but when the ludicrous has a meaning, it can be very effective in the hands of such a master as this.

> "He to die!" resumed the bishop. "He a mortal like to us!
> Death was not for him intended, though *communis omnibus*.
> Keeper, you are irreligious, for to talk and cavil thus!"

So much I have said of the manner in which Thackeray did his work, endeavouring to represent human nature as he saw it, so that his readers should learn to love what is good, and to hate what is evil. As to the merits of his style, it will be necessary to insist on them the less, because it has been generally admitted to be easy. lucid, and grammatical. I call that style easy by which the writer has succeeded in conveying to the reader that which the reader is intended to receive with the least possible amount of trouble to him. I call that style lucid which conveys to the reader most accurately all that the writer wishes to convey on any subject. The two virtues will, I think, be seen to be very different. An author may wish to give an idea that a certain flavour is bitter. He shall leave a conviction that it is simply disagreeable. Then he is not lucid. But he shall convey so much as that, in such a manner as to give the reader no trouble in arriving at the conclusion. Therefore he is easy. The subject here suggested is as little complicated as possible; but in the intercourse which is going on continually between writers and readers, affairs of all degrees of complication are continually being discussed, of a nature so complicated that he inexperienced writer is puzzled at every turn to express himself, and the altogether inartistic writer fails to do so. Who among writers has not to acknowledge that he is often unable to tell all that he has to tell? Words refuse to do it for him. He struggles and stumbles and alters and adds, but finds at last that he has gone either too far or not quite far enough. Then there comes upon him the necessity of choosing between two evils. He must either give up the fulness of his thought, and content himself with presenting some fragment of it in that lucid arrangement of words which he affects; or he must bring out his thought with ambages; he must mass his sentences inconsequentially; he must struggle up hill almost hopelessly with his phrases—so that at the end the reader will have to labour as he himself has laboured, or else to leave behind much of the fruit which it has been intended that he should garner. It is the ill-fortune of some to be neither easy or lucid; and there is nothing more wonderful in the history of letters than the patience of readers when called upon to suffer under the double calamity. It is as though a man were reading a dialogue of Plato, understanding neither the subject nor the language. But it is often the case that one has to be sacrificed to the other. The pregnant writer will sometimes solace himself by declaring that it is not his business to supply intelligence to the reader; and then, in throwing out the entirety of his thought, will not stop to remember that he cannot hope to scatter his ideas far and wide unless he can make them easily intelligible. Then the writer who is determined that his book shall not be put down because it is troublesome, is too apt to avoid the knotty bits and shirk the rocky turns, because he cannot with ease to himself make them easy to others. If this be acknowledged, I shall be held to be right in saying not only that ease and lucidity in style are different virtues, but that they are often opposed to each other. They may, however, be

combined, and then the writer will have really learned the art of writing. Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci. It is to be done, I believe, in all languages. A man by art and practice shall at least obtain such a masterhood over words as to express all that he thinks, in phrases that shall be easily understood.

In such a small space as can here be allowed, I cannot give instances to prove that this has been achieved by Thackeray. Nor would instances prove the existence of the virtue, though instances might the absence. The proof lies in the work of the man's life, and can only become plain to those who have read his writings. I must refer readers to their own experiences, and ask them whether they have found themselves compelled to study passages in Thackeray in order that they might find a recondite meaning, or whether they have not been sure that they and the author have together understood all that there was to understand in the matter. Have they run backward over the passages, and then gone on not quite sure what the author meant? If not, then he has been easy and lucid. We have not had it so easy with all modern writers, nor with all that are old. I may best, perhaps, explain my meaning by taking something written long ago; something very valuable, in order that I may not damage my argument by comparing the easiness of Thackeray with the harshness of some author who has in other respects failed of obtaining approbation. If you take the play of *Cymbeline*, you will, I think, find it to be anything but easy reading. Nor is Shakespeare always lucid. For purposes of his own he will sometimes force his readers to doubt his meaning, even after prolonged study. It has ever been so with *Hamlet*. My readers will not, I think, be so crossgrained with me as to suppose that I am putting Thackeray as a master of style above Shakespeare. I am only endeavouring to explain by reference to the great master the condition of literary production which he attained. Whatever Thackeray says, the reader cannot fail to understand; and whatever Thackeray attempts to communicate, he succeeds in conveying.

That he is grammatical I must leave to my readers' judgment, with a simple assertion in his favour. There are some who say that grammar—by which I mean accuracy of composition, in accordance with certain acknowledged rules—is only a means to an end; and that if a writer can absolutely achieve the end by some other mode of his own, he need not regard the prescribed means. If a man can so write as to be easily understood, and to convey lucidly that which he has to convey without accuracy of grammar, why should he subject himself to unnecessary trammels? Why not make a path for himself, if the path so made will certainly lead him whither he wishes to go? The answer is, that no other path will lead others whither he wishes to carry them but that which is common to him and to those others. It is necessary that there should be a ground equally familiar to the writer and to his readers. If there be no such common ground, they will not come into full accord. There have been recusants who, by a certain acuteness of their own, have partly done so—wilful recusants; but

they have been recusants, not to the extent of discarding grammar—which no writer could do and not be altogether in the dark—but so far as to have created for themselves a phraseology which has been picturesque by reason of its illicit vagaries; as a woman will sometimes please ill-instructed eyes and ears by little departures from feminine propriety. They have probably laboured in their vocation as sedulously as though they had striven to be correct, and have achieved at the best but a short-lived success—as is the case also with the unconventional female. The charm of the disorderly soon loses itself in the ugliness of disorder. And there are others rebellious from grammar, who are, however, hardly to be called rebels, because the laws which they break have never been altogether known to them. Among those very dear to me in English literature, one or two might be named of either sort, whose works, though they have that in them which will insure to them a long life, will become from year to year less valuable and less venerable, because their authors have either scorned or have not known that common ground of language on which the author and his readers should stand together. My purport here is only with Thackeray, and I say that he stands always on that common ground. He quarrels with none of the laws. As the lady who is most attentive to conventional propriety may still have her own fashion of dress and her own mode of speech, so had Thackeray very manifestly his own style; but it is one the correctness of which has never been impugned.

I hold that gentleman to be the best dressed whose dress no one observes. I am not sure but that the same may be said of an author's written language. Only, where shall we find an example of such perfection? Always easy, always lucid, always correct, we may find them; but who is the writer, easy, lucid, and correct, who has not impregnated his writing with something of that personal flavour which we call mannerism? To speak of authors well known to all readers—Does not *The Rambler* taste of Johnson; *The Decline and Fall*, of Gibbon; *The Middle Ages*, of Hallam; *The History of England*, of Macaulay; and *The Invasion of the Crimea*, of Kinglake? Do we not know the elephantine tread of *The Saturday*, and the precise tone of *The Spectator?* I have sometimes thought that Swift has been nearest to the mark of any—writing English and not writing Swift. But I doubt whether an accurate observer would not trace even here the "mark of the beast." Thackeray, too, has a strong flavour of Thackeray. I am inclined to think that his most besetting sin in style—the little ear-mark by which he is most conspicuous—is a certain affected familiarity. He indulges too frequently in little confidences with individual readers, in which pretended allusions to himself are frequent. "What would you do? what would you say now, if you were in such a position?" he asks. He describes this practice of his in the preface to *Pendennis*. "It is a sort of confidential talk between writer and reader. . . . In the course of his volubility the perpetual speaker must of necessity lay bare his own weaknesses, vanities, peculiarities." In

the short contributions to periodicals on which he tried his 'prentice hand, such addresses and conversations were natural and efficacious; but in a larger work of fiction they cause an absence of that dignity to which even a novel may aspire. You feel that each morsel as you read it is a detached bit, and that it has all been written in detachments. The book is robbed of its integrity by a certain good-humoured geniality of language, which causes the reader to be almost too much at home with his author. There is a saying that familiarity breeds contempt, and I have been sometimes inclined to think that our author has sometimes failed to stand up for himself with sufficiency of "personal deportment."

In other respects Thackeray's style is excellent. As I have said before, the reader always understands his words without an effort, and receives all that the author has to give.

There now remains to be discussed the matter of our author's work. The manner and the style are but the natural wrappings in which the goods have been prepared for the market. Of these goods it is no doubt true that unless the wrappings be in some degree meritorious the article will not be accepted at all; but it is the kernel which we seek, which, if it be not of itself sweet and digestible, cannot be made serviceable by any shell, however pretty or easy to be cracked. I have said previously that it is the business of a novel to instruct in morals and to amuse. I will go further, and will add, having been for many years a most prolific writer of novels myself, that I regard him who can put himself into close communication with young people year after year without making some attempt to do them good as a very sorry fellow indeed. However poor your matter may be, however near you may come to that "foolishest of existing mortals," as Carlyle presumes some unfortunate novelist to be, still, if there be those who read your works, they will undoubtedly be more or less influenced by what they find there. And it is because the novelist amuses that he is thus influential. The sermon too often has no such effect, because it is applied with the declared intention of having it. The palpable and overt dose the child rejects; but that which is cunningly insinuated by the aid of jam or honey is accepted unconsciously, and goes on upon its curative mission. So it is with the novel. It is taken because of its jam and honey. But, unlike the honest simple jam and honey of the household cupboard, it is never unmixed with physic. There will be the dose within it, either curative or poisonous. The girl will be taught modesty or immodesty, truth or falsehood; the lad will be taught honour or dishonour, simplicity or affectation. Without the lesson the amusement will not be there. There are novels which certainly can teach nothing; but then neither can they amuse any one.

I should be said to insist absurdly on the power of my own confraternity if I were to declare that the bulk of the young people in the upper and middle classes receive their moral teaching chiefly from the novels they read. Mothers would no doubt think of their own sweet teaching; fathers of the examples which they set; and

schoolmasters of the excellence of their instructions. Happy is the country that has such mothers, fathers, and schoolmasters! But the novelist creeps in closer than the schoolmaster, closer than the father, closer almost than the mother. He is the chosen guide, the tutor whom the young pupil chooses for herself. She retires with him, suspecting no lesson, safe against rebuke, throwing herself head and heart into the narration as she can hardly do into her task-work; and there she is taught—how she shall learn to love; how she shall receive the lover when he comes; how far she should advance to meet the joy; why she should be reticent, and not throw herself at once into this new delight. It is the same with the young man, though he would be more prone even than she to reject the suspicion of such tutorship. But he too will there learn either to speak the truth, or to lie; and will receive from his novel lessons either of real manliness, or of that affected apishness and tailor-begotten demeanour which too many professors of the craft give out as their dearest precepts.

At any rate the close intercourse is admitted. Where is the house now from which novels are tabooed? Is it not common to allow them almost indiscriminately, so that young and old each chooses his own novel? Shall he, then, to whom this close fellowship is allowed—this inner confidence—shall he not be careful what words he uses, and what thoughts he expresses, when he sits in council with his young friend? This, which it will certainly be his duty to consider with so much care, will be the matter of his work. We know what was thought of such matter when Lydia in the play was driven to the necessity of flinging "*Peregrine Pickle* under the toilet," and thrusting "*Lord Aimwell* under the sofa." We have got beyond that now, and are tolerably sure that our girls do not hide their novels. The more freely they are allowed, the more necessary is it that he who supplies shall take care that they are worthy of the trust that is given to them.

Now let the reader ask himself what are the lessons which Thackeray has taught. Let him send his memory running back over all those characters of whom we have just been speaking, and ask himself whether any girl has been taught to be immodest, or any man unmanly, by what Thackeray has written. A novelist has two modes of teaching—by good example or bad. It is not to be supposed that because the person treated of be evil, therefore the precept will be evil. If so, some personages with whom we have been made well acquainted from our youth upwards would have been omitted in our early lessons. It may be a question whether the teaching is not more efficacious which comes from the evil example. What story was ever more powerful in showing the beauty of feminine reticence, and the horrors of feminine evil-doing, than the fate of Effie Deans? The Templar would have betrayed a woman to his lust, but has not encouraged others by the freedom of his life. Varney was utterly bad—but though a gay courtier, he has enticed no others to go the way that he went. So it has been with Thackeray. His examples have been generally of that kind

—but they have all been efficacious in their teaching on the side of modesty and manliness, truth and simplicity. When some girl shall have traced from first to last the character of Beatrix, what, let us ask, will be the result on her mind? Beatrix was born noble, clever, beautiful, with certain material advantages, which it was within her compass to improve by her nobility, wit, and beauty. She was quite alive to that fact, and thought of those material advantages, to the utter exclusion, in our mind, of any idea of moral goodness. She realised it all, and told herself that that was the game she would play. "Twenty-five!" says she; "and in eight years no man has ever touched my heart!" That is her boast when she is about to be married—her only boast of herself. "A most detestable young woman!" some will say. "An awful example!" others will add. Not a doubt of it. She proves the misery of her own career so fully that no one will follow it. The example is so awful that it will surely deter. The girl will declare to herself that not in that way will she look for the happiness which she hopes to enjoy; and the young man will say, as he reads it, that no Beatrix shall touch his heart.

You may go through all his characters with the same effect. Pendennis will be scorned because he is light; Warrington loved because he is strong and merciful; Dobbin will be honoured because he is unselfish; and the old colonel, though he be foolish, vain, and weak, almost worshipped because he is so true a gentleman. It is in the handling of questions such as these that we have to look for the matter of the novelist—those moral lessons which he mixes up with his jam and his honey. I say that with Thackeray the physic is always curative and never poisonous. He may be admitted safely into that close fellowship, and be allowed to accompany the dear ones to their retreats. The girl will never become bold under his preaching, or taught to throw herself at men's heads. Nor will the lad receive a false flashy idea of what becomes a youth, when he is first about to take his place among men.

As to that other question, whether Thackeray be amusing as well as salutary, I must leave it to public opinion. There is now being brought out of his works a more splendid edition than has ever been produced in any age or any country of the writings of such an author. A certain fixed number of copies only is being issued, and each copy will cost £33 12*s.* when completed. It is understood that a very large proportion of the edition has been already bought or ordered. Cost, it will be said, is a bad test of excellence. It will not prove the merit of a book any more than it will of a horse. But it is proof of the popularity of the book. Print and illustrate and bind up some novels how you will, no one will buy them. Previous to these costly volumes, there have been two entire editions of his works since the author's death, one comparatively cheap and the other dear. Before his death his stories had been scattered in all imaginable forms. I may therefore assert that their charm has been proved by their popularity.

There remains for us only this question—whether the nature of

Thackeray's works entitle him to be called a cynic. The word is one which is always used in a bad sense. "Of a dog; currish," is the definition which we get from Johnson—quite correctly, and in accordance with its etymology. And he gives us examples. "How vilely does this cynic rhyme," he takes from Shakespeare; and Addison speaks of a man degenerating into a cynic. That Thackeray's nature was soft and kindly—gentle almost to a fault—has been shown elsewhere. But they who had called him a cynic have spoken of him merely as a writer—and as writer he has certainly taken upon himself the special task of barking at the vices and follies of the world around him. Any satirist might in the same way be called a cynic in so far as his satire goes. Swift was a cynic, certainly. Pope was cynical when he was a satirist. Juvena was all cynical, because he was all satirist. If that be what is meant, Thackeray was certainly a cynic. But that is not all that the word implies. It intends to go back beyond the work of the man, and to describe his heart. It says of any satirist so described that he has given himself up to satire, not because things have been evil, but because he himself has been evil. Hamlet is a satirist, whereas Thersites is a cynic. If Thackeray be judged after this fashion, the word is as inappropriate to the writer as to the man.

But it has to be confessed that Thackeray did allow his intellect to be too thoroughly saturated with the aspect of the ill side of things. We can trace the operation of his mind from his earliest days, when he commenced his parodies at school; when he brought out *The Snob* at Cambridge, when he sent *Yellowplush* out upon the world as a satirist on the doings of gentlemen generally; when he wrote his *Catherine*, to show the vileness of the taste for what he would have called Newgate literature; and *The Hoggarty Diamond*, to attack bubble companies; and *Barry Lyndon*, to expose the pride which a rascal may take in his rescality. Becky Sharp, Major Pendennis, Beatrix, both as a young and as an old woman, were written with the same purpose. There is a touch of satire in every drawing that he made. A jeer is needed for something that is ridiculous, scorn has to be thrown on something that is vile. The same feeling is to be found in every line of every ballad.

VANITAS VANITATUM.

Methinks the text is never stale,
  And life is every day renewing
Fresh comments on the old old tale,
  Of Folly, Fortune, Glory, Ruin.

Hark to the preacher, preaching still!
  He lifts his voice and cries his sermon,
Here at St. Peter's of Cornhill,
  As yonder on the Mount of Hermon—

For you and me to heart to take
  (O dear beloved brother readers),
To-day—as when the good king spake
  Beneath the solemn Syrian cedars.

It was just so with him always. He was "crying his sermon," hoping, if it might be so, to do something towards lessening the evils he saw around him. We all preach our sermon, but not always with the same earnestness. He had become so urgent in the cause, so loud in his denunciations, that he did not stop often to speak of the good things around him. Now and again he paused and blessed amid the torrent of his anathemas. There are Dobbin, and Esmond and Colonel Newcome. But his anathemas are the loudest. It has been so, I think, nearly always with the eloquent preachers.

I will insert here—especially here at the end of this chapter, in which I have spoken of Thackeray's matter and manner of writing, because of the justice of the criticism conveyed—the lines which Lord Houghton wrote on his death, and which are to be found in the February number of *The Cornhill* of 1864. It was the first number printed after his death. I would add that, though no Dean applied for permission to bury Thackeray in Westminster Abbey, his bust was placed there without delay. What is needed by the nation in such a case is simply a lasting memorial there, where such memorials are most often seen and most highly honoured. But we can all of us sympathise with the feeling of the poet, writing immediately on the loss of such a friend:

When one, whose nervous English verse
  Public and party hates defied,
Who bore and bandied many a curse
  Of angry times—when Dryden died,

Our royal abbey's Bishop-Dean
  Waited for no suggestive prayer,
But, ere one day closed o'er the scene,
  Craved, as a boon, to lay him there.

The wayward faith, the faulty life,
  Vanished before a nation's pain.
Panther and Hind forgot their strife,
  And rival statesmen thronged the fane.

O gentle censor of our age!
  Prime master of our ampler tongue!
Whose word of wit and generous page
  Were never wrath, except with wrong,—

Fielding—without the manner's dross,
  Scott—with a spirit's larger room,
What Prelate deems thy grave his loss?
  What Halifax erects thy tomb?

But, may be, he—who so could draw
  The hidden great—the humble wise,
Yielding with them to God's good law,
  Makes the Pantheon where he lies.

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